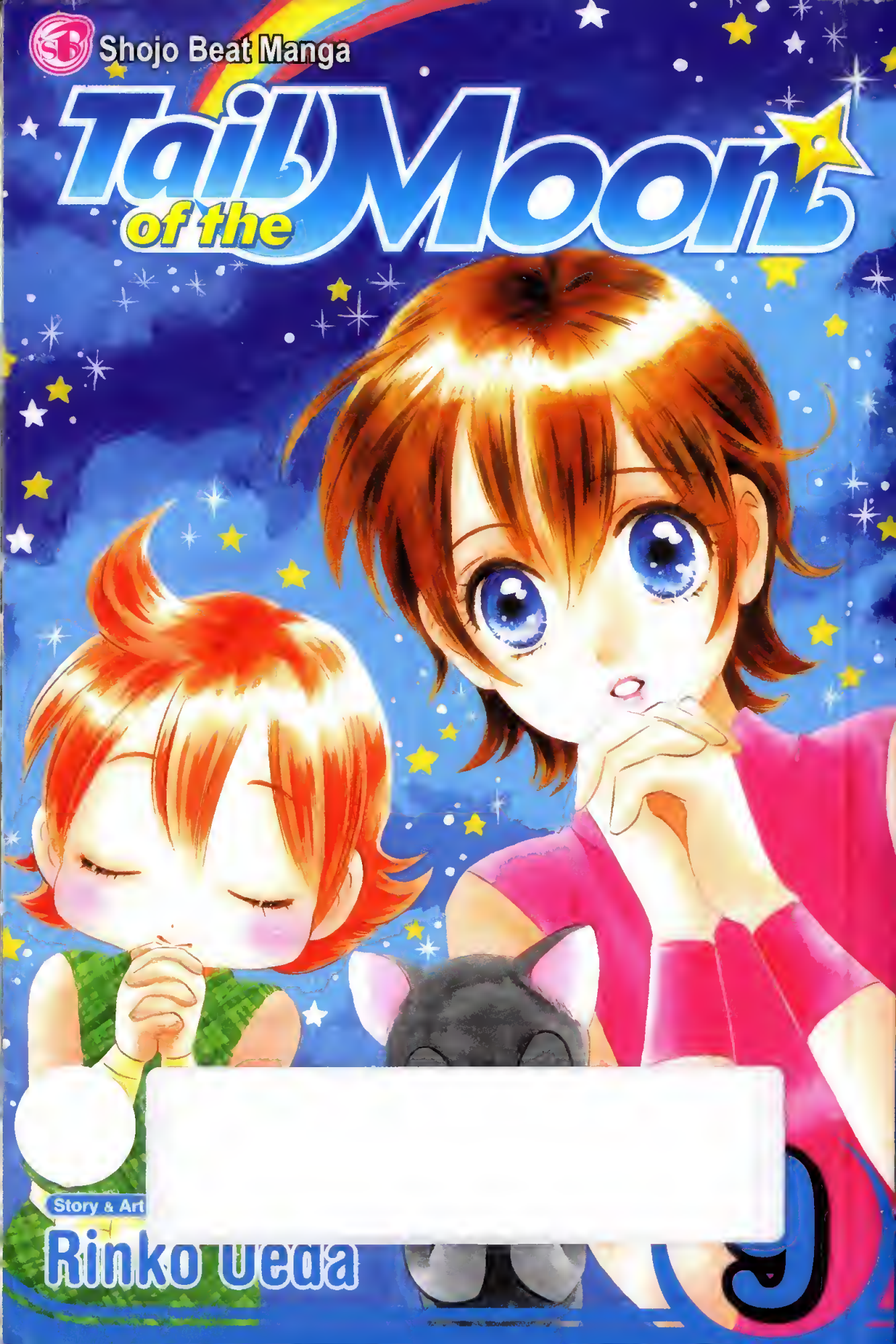
Shojo Beat Manga
Tail of the Moon
Story & Art
Rinko Ueda

Tail of the Moon

Usagi is the granddaughter of the leader of a prestigious ninja village, but she's such a klutz that she's never made it out of the kiddie class. Frustrated with Usagi's lack of progress, her great-grandfather sends her to marry Lord Hanzo and have lots of ninja babies. But the lord has no interest in her or her childbearing potential!

At the tea ceremony, Hanzo saves Usagi and takes her to his hideout in the city. Unfortunately, Mamezo is caught by the formidable Akechi Mitsuhide and forced to reveal where Hanzo's hideout is! Meanwhile, Ranmaru feels humiliated for letting Hanzo get the best of him and vows to hunt down all the ninja of Iga by himself...

9

Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

Shojo Beat

Tail of the Moon

9

Story & Art by

Rinko Ueda

Chapter 57

Tail of the Moon

Tail of the Moon

Volume 9

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Story Thus Far...

It is the Era of the Warring States. Usagi is a failure as a ninja, but she is a skilled herbalist. She is working hard to qualify as a ninja so she can be the bride of Hattori Hanzo (aka "Shimo no Hanzo")!

Usagi's feelings for Hanzo are finally mutual, and she can't wait to marry him once they return to Iga. Unfortunately, they're forced to go to Okazaki instead because they can't reveal their true identities to Ranmaru, Oda Nobunaga's page. On the way, Usagi learns that Nobunaga plans to attack Iga!

Hanzo heads out to Azuchi to find out more about Nobunaga's strategy. Meanwhile, Usagi and Goemon are ordered to gather information at the capital, posing as a husband and wife who run a dumpling shop. When Usagi hears that Nobunaga is at Honnoji, she goes there alone to investigate.

Usagi succeeds in getting information about the attack, but Ranmaru finds out she's a ninja! At a tea ceremony, Usagi uses a sleeping potion on the attendees in an attempt to escape, but Ranmaru discovers the tea's effects and orders Usagi's capture. Suddenly, Hanzo appears!

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE USAGI AND YURI WEARING CHINESE DRESSES!"

-MIINA KONDO, GUNMA PREFECTURE

IT'S REALLY SEXY HOW YOU CAN SEE THE LEG FROM THE SLIT ON THE SIDE.
♥
I BET HANZO WOULD BE EXCITED...
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
HAVE A PEACH-SHAPED BUN! ♪
GRIN ♥

DOOM
FWISH
ZWAK
IN... INTRUDER!!
SWAY
DASH
DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY!!

NOW'S YOUR CHANCE...
NOBODY'S COMING AFTER YOU.
SHA
YURI?!
RIGHT.
WHERE ARE WE?!
DON'T WORRY.
THIS IS MY HIDEOUT.

WHERE DID THEY DISAPPEAR OFF TO?!
WHERE'S THE INTRUDER?!
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
GRR...
...EVEN IF I HAVE TO COMB THE WHOLE CITY!
NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES, I'LL CAPTURE YOU...

OH!
KRASH
PANT
PANT
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
JIWONE
JIWONE
HERE, DRINK THIS.
TREMBLE
I'M SORRY...
MY HAND...
...WON'T STOP... SHAKING...
USAGI...

ZWAK
S...
SORRY...
FOR GOD'S SAKE...
YOU ALMOST WORRIED ME TO DEATH, YOU KNOW!!
YOU CAN TALK ABOUT THAT AFTER YOU DRINK SOME WATER AND CALM DOWN.
TH...THE ATTACK ON IGA...
HA... HANZO...

GASP...
GASP...
I WILL.
SHHK

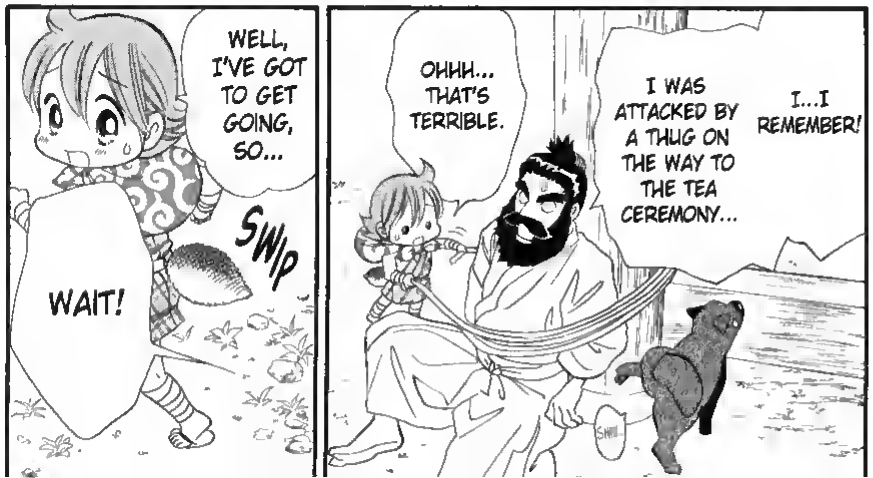
WELL THEN, I'M OFF TO SAKAI TO HELP GOEMON.
BE CAREFUL.

HANZO...
THANK GOD I'M ALIVE...
I GOT TO SEE HANZO AGAIN...

YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
I'M HERE FOR YOU.

TICKLE
TICKLE
AAAAH-CHOO!
URK!
IS... IS HE... DEAD?
SNAP
AAAAGH!
YIP
YIP

I'LL GITCHU OUTTA DIS...
CHOMP
CHOMP
WH... WHERE AM I?!


WELL, I'VE GOT TO GET GOING, SO...
SWIP
WAIT!
OHHH... THAT'S TERRIBLE.
I WAS ATTACKED BY A THUG ON THE WAY TO THE TEA CEREMONY...
I...I REMEMBER!

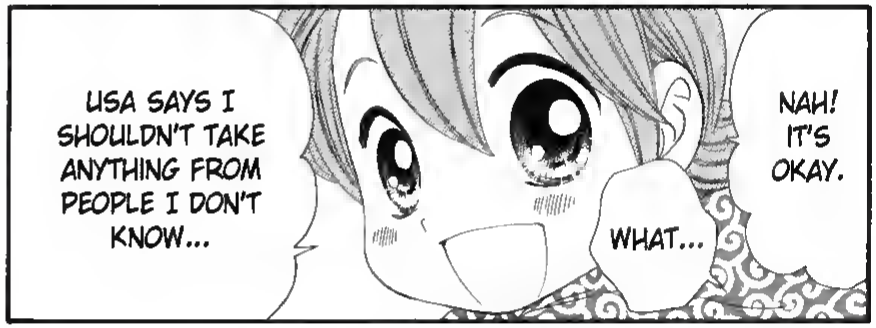
I HOPE USA'LL HELP ME LOOK FOR HIM ONCE HER ASSIGNMENT'S OVER...
TMP
PANT
PANT
THE PIGLET WASN'T AT THE FOREST WE PASSED THROUGH ON OUR WAY TO THE CAPITAL...
WHERE CAN HE BE...?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
USAMARU!
YIP
YIP
!!
TMP
TMP
YOU'RE GOING THE WRONG WAY...

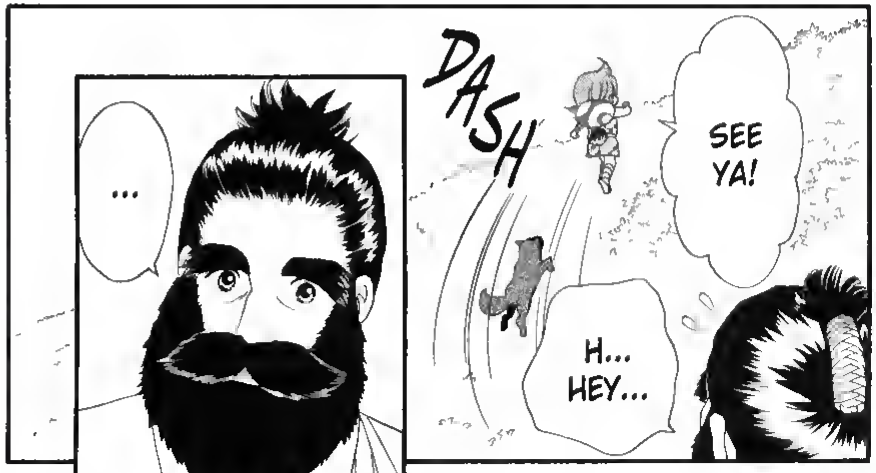
IF HE WAS ALIVE...
...HE WOULD BE ABOUT THE SAME AGE AS THAT BOY...

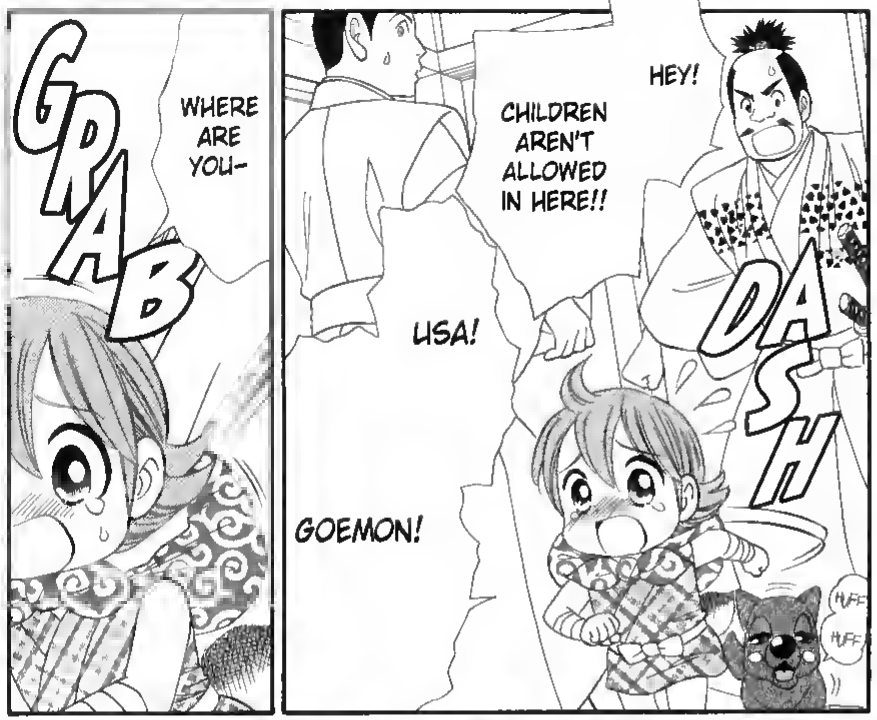
WELL, HERE.
YOU CAN HAVE THIS.

HOW STRANGE... THAT THUG ATTACKED ME BUT LEFT MY MONEY...

HM?
LET ME GIVE YOU SOME-THING...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE


USA SAYS I SHOULDN'T TAKE ANYTHING FROM PEOPLE I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT...
NAH! IT'S OKAY.


...
DASH
SEE YA!
H... HEY...


GRAB
WHERE ARE YOU-
HEY!
CHILDREN AREN'T ALLOWED IN HERE!!
USA!
GOEMON!
DASH
HUFF HUFF

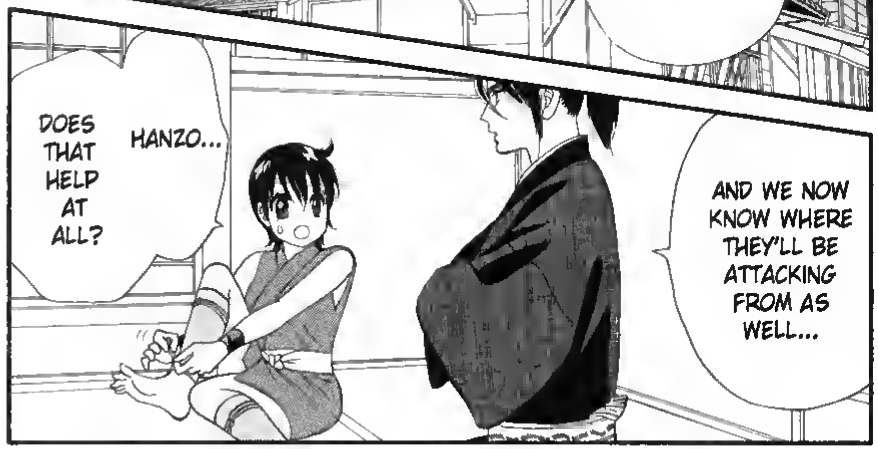
WAAARGH
I TAKE IT YOU KNOW USAGI THEN?

NGH NGH
THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE AT THE CAPITAL...
HUFF HUFF
THERE'S USA'S DUMPLING SHOP!
TMP TMP TMP

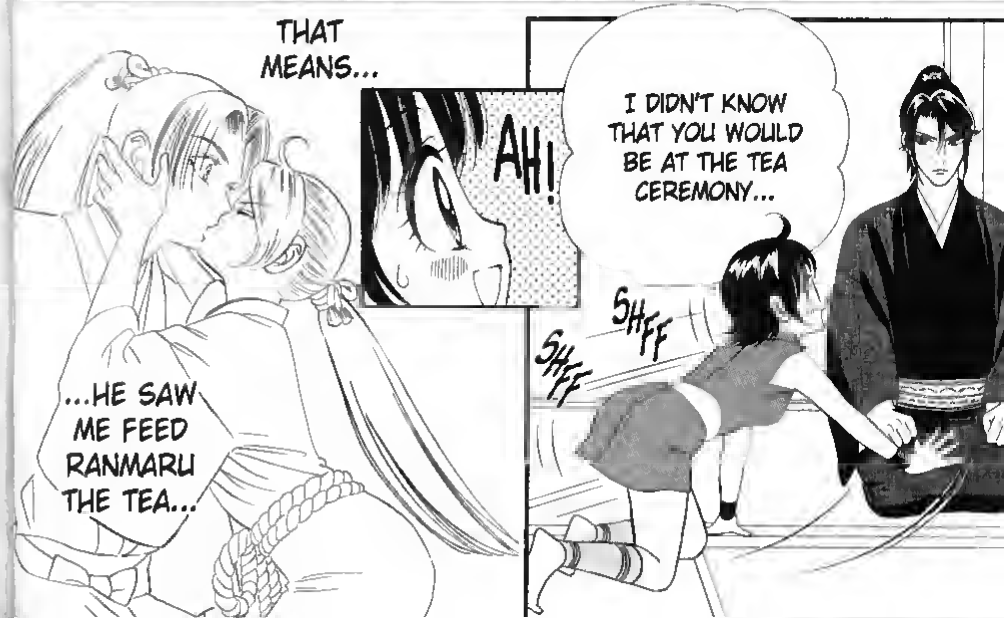
WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?!
I WANT EVERYTHING MOVED OUT OF THERE, INCLUDING THE CAT!!
MEOW
SADANARI...
BESIDES THIS CAT, THE PLACE IS EMPTY!

GLOOM
WHAT'S WRONG?
HA...
HANZO! PLEASE DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA.
...MOUTH-FEEDING...
THAT M...
I KNOW.
I HAD TO MAKE RANMARU FALL ASLEEP, SO I...I...
THA...
BUT!
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING AS A KUNOICHI.

SO NOBUKATSU WILL BE THE LEADER?


HANZO...
DOES THAT HELP AT ALL?
AND WE NOW KNOW WHERE THEY'LL BE ATTACKING FROM AS WELL...

BRIGHTEN
YES. YOU DID WELL.


THAT MEANS...
AH!
...HE SAW ME FEED RANMARU THE TEA...
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU WOULD BE AT THE TEA CEREMONY...
SHFF
SHFF

I'VE DISINFECTED IT.

YOU NEED TO STUDY THE WAYS OF NINJA MORE, USAGI!!
SHOCK
EEEE...
THERE MUST HAVE BEEN ANOTHER WAY!

OH...
RAISE YOUR HEAD.
AT THIS RATE, IT'S GOING TO TAKE ME FOREVER TO GET QUALIFIED...
I AM NOT ANGRY!!
ARE YOU ANGRY, HANZO?
HE IS ANGRY...

YES...
I'M SO HAPPY...
I WOULDN'T MIND IF I DIED RIGHT NOW...
!!

NO MATTER WHAT THE SITUATION IS...
...YOU MUSTN'T ALLOW ANYONE TO TOUCH YOUR LIPS BUT ME.

WAAAAH!
THIS IS TERRIBLE!!
THAT'S PROOF THAT YOU ENTERED HONNOJI ON YOUR OWN TO COMPLETE YOUR MISSION.
IT'S NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF.
THANKS TO YOU, I'M SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO STOP THE ATTACK ON IGA.
I CAN DO ANYTHING FOR YOU, HANZO!!

WHAT IS THIS?!
WHA... WHAT...?
ACK.
BALD SPOT ?!
SHEEN
YOU HAVE A BALD SPOT, USAGI!!
IT MUST BE BECAUSE OF ALL THE STRESS YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH...
RUB RUB
AAAAGH!
YOU'RE RIGHT!

SO THIS IS WHERE THE IGA NINJA ARE HIDING...
ZWAK
WAA...
WAARGH...
MAMEZO !!

I'LL DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT HANZO'S SMILE...
YOU'RE SO...
HAH.
WHA-
HIDE.
THUG
TH-THUMP TH-THUMP

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE MAMEZO AS A HIGH SCHOOLER!"

-SHIIYAN, IBARAKI PREFECTURE

I'VE ASKED USA TO MAKE ME OLDER. ♪
BUT NO MATTER HOW OLD YOU BECOME, YOU'RE STILL LITTLE MAMEZO TO ME. ☆
MAMEZO'S SO GOOD-LOOKING... ♥ HE HOLDS HIS OWN AGAINST HANZO, DON'T YOU THINK?!
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

HERE.
GO TO YOUR FRIENDS.
OF ALL THE TIMES TO BE WITHOUT A WEAPON!
UNGH...
SNIFF...
THERE YOU ARE.
SHA

ARE THEY OUT?
USA...!
DON'T!
MAMEZ...
HGPH

IF YOU'RE NOT OUR ENEMY, THEN WHO ARE YOU?!
MAMEZO ...!
USAAAAA...
WHARGH
MY NAME IS MITSUHIDE AKECHI.
I'M AGAINST LORD NOBUNAGA'S PLAN OF ATTACKING IGA.
GR
AB
STOP!
I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY!!

OH...
THAT MEDICINE YOU GAVE ME HAS HELPED IMPROVE MY EYESIGHT A GREAT DEAL.
MEETING YOU...
...HAS HELPED ME REALIZE THAT NOT ALL NINJA ARE DANGEROUS.

I WAS TAUGHT THAT NINJA ARE EVIL BEINGS THAT DECEIVE PEOPLE AND USE STRANGE TRICKS TO BRING ABOUT TURMOIL.
MITSUHIDE IS AGAINST THE ATTACK ON IGA?!
I...I APOLOGIZE FOR TRICKING YOU, BUT I HAD TO DO IT TO PROTECT IGA...
I'M NOT ANGRY AT YOU OR ANYTHING OF THE SORT.
I CAME HERE TO THANK YOU.
THANK ME?!

DO YOU MEAN THAT?
YES!!
YOU'VE BEEN REALLY KIND TO ME, SO I WAS THINKING ABOUT MAKING A MEDICINE THAT WOULD IMPROVE YOUR EYESIGHT EVEN MORE!!
SO PLEASE TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE TROUBLE WITH YOUR EYES.
THIS SOUNDS PROMISING.
MITSUHIDE.
I'LL HAVE USAGI STAY BEHIND AND MAKE THE MEDICINE FOR YOU.

YES.
I'M GOING TO SUGGEST TO LORD NOBUNAGA THAT THERE MAY BE A WAY TO COEXIST WITH NINJA RATHER THAN GETTING RID OF THEM BY FORCE.
R... REALLY?
USAGI!
HUG
THANK YOU SO MUCH!

I WANT TO GO BACK TO IGA TOO, BUT...
USA, ARE YOU GOING TO STAY BEHIND?
SHFF
SHFF
SHHHK
ALL RIGHT.
I'LL BE SURE TO MAKE THAT MEDICINE SOON, SO THAT'S SOMETHING FOR YOU TO LOOK FORWARD TO.
...BUT IF HE REALLY IS AGAINST THE ATTACK ON IGA, IT WOULD BE BEST TO HAVE SOMEONE KEEP IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH HIM.
WE CANNOT FULLY TRUST MITSUHIDE YET...

OH, MY...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU!!
IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR PEOPLE TO HELP ONE ANOTHER WHEN THEY'RE IN TROUBLE.
STAY BEHIND...
THEN I'M NOT GOING BACK TO IGA?!
HOW WONDERFUL IT WOULD BE TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE FACES OF MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER AGAIN...

THAT'S RIGHT...
I'LL PROTECT THE BOTH OF YOU.
OKAY.
...SO I WON'T BE SCARED.
HANZO IS WHERE MY HOME IS...
SO IT'S NOT OVER YET?
GETTING NOBUNAGA TO CHANGE HIS MIND ABOUT THE ATTACK WON'T BE AN EASY THING TO DO.
WE MUST GET AS MUCH INFORMATION AS WE CAN ABOUT NOBUNAGA FROM MITSUHIDE...
...AND STOP THE ATTACK ON IGA. OTHERWISE, OUR WORK WILL NEVER BE DONE.

IT'S RANMARU.
I'M SORRY I'M LATE!!
CLIP CLOP
CLIP CLOP
How awful..
I CAN'T BELIEVE EVEN A YOUNG NINJA LIKE HIM WOULD CHOOSE DEATH OVER BEING CAUGHT...
WHAAAAAT?!
WHEN I TRIED TO INTERROGATE HIM, HE KILLED HIMSELF BY DRINKING POISON...
WELL...
AND WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THAT CHILD?
MITSUHIDE.
WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

WHERE DID YOU MEET THAT KUNOICHI WHOM YOU INTRODUCED TO US AS YOUR GIRLFRIEND?
RANMARU.
JUST A CAT?!
ALL WE FOUND IS A CAT.
SO WHERE ARE THE IGA NINJA?

GREETINGS

Hello, it's Ue-Rin.

I started writing the installments of "Ue-Rin's Manga School" from sheer momentum, so every time I continue writing it and read previous passages, I start feeling really embarrassed

I've been rolling around every day on my balance ball, which I bought to lose weight.

DON'T FORGET TO REPORT IT ALL TO LORD NOBUNAGA!!
...
IT'S JUST AS YOU SAY...

USAGI DIDN'T REMEMBER THAT TIME, SO I PURPOSELY LET HER COME CLOSE TO ME...
RANMARU, YOU WEREN'T LEAKING INFORMATION TO HER, WERE YOU?
KOUGA ?!
THE FIRST TIME I MET HER WAS IN KOUGA.
IT WAS ALL GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN UNTIL THAT MAN APPEARED!!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT PLAN YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, BUT THEY GOT THE BETTER OF YOU, RANMARU!!

SIZZLE
SIZZLE
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I WAS GOING TO WAKE UP EARLY TO MAKE BREAKFAST...
I'M SORRY!!
PADAAH
CLOMP
CLOMP
I WANTED TO COOK SOMETHING GOOD FOR YOU SINCE YOU'RE TIRED FROM YOUR WORK AT HONNOJI.
HAN...
...ZO...
THROB
THROB
EEEEE!
OW...

CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
CHOP
OHH...
THE PLEASANT SMELL OF MISO SOUP...
YOU'VE BEEN SLEEPING WELL.
BREAKFAST WILL BE READY IN A MINUTE.

I'M SO THRILLED TO SEE HANZO COOK BREAKFAST FOR ME.
SOB
I SAID NO!!
NOOO, SAY IT AGAIN...
AND HE CONTINUED TO REJECT ME...
I SAID NO.
...BUT HE COMPLETELY REJECTED ME AT THE WEDDING BANQUET.
IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT ON MY END...
ENGAGEMENT CANCELLED!!
YOU CAN HAVE THE CHILD ALONE!!

IT ACTUALLY HURTS...
MY HEART'S BEATING SO FAST...
WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
THROB
THROB
THROB
OWWW...
THROB

THROB
THROB
OWW...
I... I'M NOT JOKING...
STOP JOKING AROUND!!
IF IT'S BAD FOR YOUR HEART, THEN I'LL NEVER SAY IT AGAIN!!
OWW
I GUESS I'M HAPPY BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU SAID.

UH...
IT'S JUST...
IT'S NOT THAT...
USA, WHAT'S WRONG?
DON'T YOU LIKE THE MISO SOUP I MADE?
SHOCK

TH-THUMP TH-THUMP
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ME...?
HA... HANZO...

ER...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT...!
WHAT ?!
AAAH... JUST FORGET IT...
YOU'RE SLOW AT CATCHING ON, HANZO!!
FORGET IT!!
TELL ME WHAT YOU MEAN.
DON'T STOP THERE.
FORGET IT...

BUT NOW WE FINALLY SHARE THE SAME FEELINGS... ♡

I WONDER WHEN HANZO...
...FELL IN LOVE WITH ME?

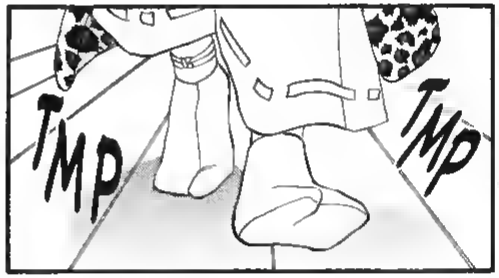
WAIT.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN... WHEN...

I NEVER ACTUALLY HEARD HANZO SAY HE LOVES ME!!
!!

YES.
I'M GOING TO HUNT... IGA NINJA.

N... NOT AT ALL...
YOU SOUND HAPPY ABOUT THAT, SADA-NARI.

LORD NOBUNAGA MUST HAVE SCOLDED RANMARU FIERCELY LAST NIGHT.


TMP
TMP

ARE YOU GOING HUNTING OR SOME-THING?!
WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?
RANMARU.

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO IN A SOCCER UNIFORM!"

-CM, NAGANO PREFECTURE

DON'T YOU THINK HANZO WOULD BE A RELIABLE GOALKEEPER? PROTECT ME, TOO... ♥
THE BALL IS YOUR FRIEND. ☆
THE YATAGARASU, WHICH IS THE MASCOT FOR THE JAPAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION, IS A MYTHICAL BIRD THAT APPEARS IN JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY.
IGA
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

I...
I AM TRULY SORRY...
MAKING A FOOL OF MY PAGE IS THE SAME AS MAKING A FOOL OF ME.
THIS IS A BLUNDER ON MY PART, SO...
DON'T EVER SHOW YOUR FACE TO ME AGAIN!
SO YOU WERE MADE A FOOL OF BY AN IGA NINJA.

HUNT...
...IGA NINJA ?!

RAN-MARU.
THE HEAD OF AN IGA NINJA!
LET ME HELP YOU.
THIS IGA NINJA HUNT OF YOURS...
THANK YOU.
I MUST CONTACT HANZO IMMEDIATELY...
BUT YOU'VE GOT OTHER WORK TO ATTEND TO...
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I'LL NOTIFY YOU AS SOON AS I FIND OUT SOMETHING.

LORD NOBUNAGA...
IF YOU WANT TO STAY BY MY SIDE...
...THEN BRING ME THE HEAD OF AN IGA NINJA!

THANK YOU SO MUCH! ♡
THE MISO SOUP YOU MADE WAS DELICIOUS, HANZO! ♡♡
OF COURSE.
I'LL GO WASH THE DISHES.
IT'S OKAY. TAKE YOUR TIME.
MNCH MNCH
EAT FASTER, MAMEZO.
IS THERE A WELL NEARBY ...?
DON'T GO OUTSIDE!!

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (17)

I felt stressed about the lateness of my editor's replies, so I began to draw a rough draft of a manga that I was going to send to a different publisher. Around that time, I finally received a reply from my editor telling me that the rough draft I'd sent them previously had been accepted, so I was able to start working on the final draft. That was around autumn of my third year in middle school, and my high school entrance exams were getting close. At first, I intended to apply to a normal local high school, but after I decided to become a manga artist, I became interested in going to a private high school with an art department.

HUH?
NOBUNAGA'S RETAINERS WILL RECOGNIZE OUR FACES.
IT'S TOO DANGEROUS TO WALK AROUND THE CAPITAL RIGHT NOW!
I'LL DO THE HOUSE-WORK.
YOU NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON MAKING A MEDICINE FOR MITSUHIDE'S EYES SO THAT WE GAIN HIS TRUST.

Sigh...
CAT AND DOG, I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT ALL.
OH, NO!!
THEY TOLD ME TO LOOK AFTER MYAAKO...!!
Take care of Myaako..
Meow
THE CAT WAS CAUGHT!!
AAH
HEY, MAMEZO...
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CAT?!
DON'T FORGET THAT YOU'RE IN ENEMY TERRITORY.
IF SOMEBODY SUSPICIOUS COMES HERE WHILE I'M AWAY...
PUSH

I'M AFRAID NOT.
YOU ARE TO STAY WITH USAGI, MAMEZO.
SHOCK
I'LL GO AND PICK THE HERBS.
BUT THE HERBS...
I CAN'T GO OUT, EITHER?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU NEED TO GO OUTSIDE FOR?
I GOT SEPARATED FROM USAMARU AT THE DUMPLING SHOP...
USAMARU COULD HAVE BEEN CAUGHT BY THOSE SCARY MEN...

IT'S NOTHING TO CRY ABOUT, MAMEZO...
WAAARGH, IT'S SO DARK...
KRRSHUP
F...
...FIVE STEPS ?!
SQUEAK
ONCE YOU'RE INSIDE, MOVE FIVE STEPS TO THE LEFT.
OH...
THIS DOOR WILL ONLY TURN ONE WAY.

TUG
DON'T GO ANY FARTHER!!
EH, HOW MANY STEPS WAS THAT?
WHY?

FWISH
THIS IS WHY.

SPIN
WHOA!
...YOU SHOULD HIDE BEHIND THIS SECRET DOOR.
GO INSIDE.
OOOOOH!
SPIN SPIN
THIS IS FUN! ♪
I WANT TO SPIN AROUND TOO!
IT IS NOT A TOY TO PLAY WITH!!

I...I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE IN THERE...
IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN, YOU LEAD THE WAY, MAMEZO.
O... OKAY...
I'LL GO CHECK IT OUT AGAIN...
MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE WAY BY HEART...
DASH

I HAVEN'T EVEN STARTED THINKING ABOUT THE MEDICINE YET...
TMP TMP
THEN MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME IDEA BY THE TIME I GET BACK.

I'M GOING OUT FOR A WHILE.
IF THERE ARE ANY HERBS YOU NEED, I'LL GO PICK THEM UP TOO.
YOU'RE GOING ALREADY?!

COME BACK SOON!!

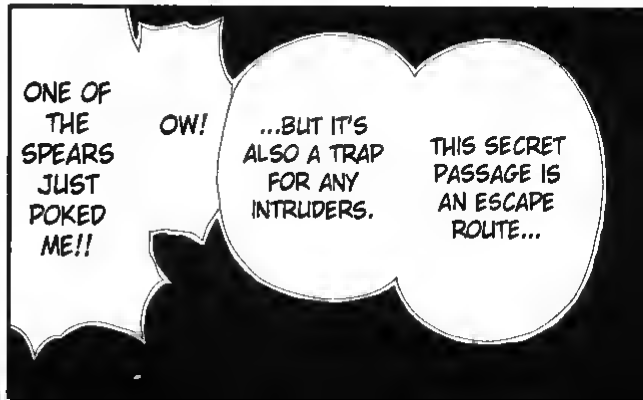
DON'T LOOK LIKE THAT NOW.

NEXT, TAKE TWO STEPS TO THE LEFT. THEN CROUCH DOWN AND KEEP MOVING FORWARD.
MORE BAMBOO SPEARS?!
AND AFTER YOU MOVE THROUGH THIS NARROW PASSAGE...
EEEK

PHEW...
...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ESCAPE OUTSIDE.

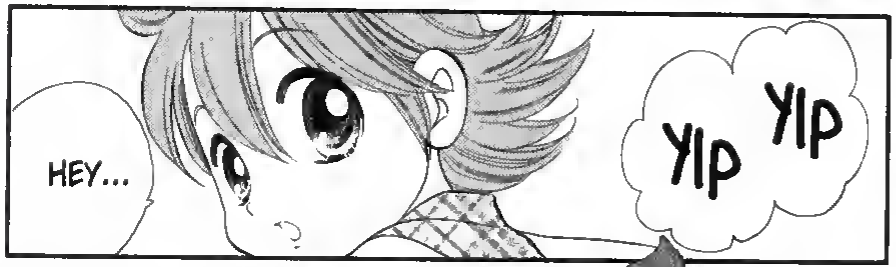
HUH?!
SHUP
NOW LET'S GO BACK.

PANT
PANT


ONE OF THE SPEARS JUST POKED ME!!
OW!
...BUT IT'S ALSO A TRAP FOR ANY INTRUDERS.
THIS SECRET PASSAGE IS AN ESCAPE ROUTE...

I'M GONNA DO MY BEST!!
AND UNTIL THE DAY I GET HANZO TO SAY HE LOVES ME...
TWITCH
USA, ARE YOU OKAY?
I'M SO HAPPY...
I CAN'T GO BACK TO IGA YET...
...BUT I GET TO LIVE UNDER THE SAME ROOF WITH HANZO FOR A WHILE... ♡
ERGH...
USA, DO YOU HAVE A HEAD-ACHE?
ARRRRGH!
You did hit your head back there.
BE A GOOD GIRL AND WAIT FOR ME.
I MEMORIZED THE WAY...!
USA!
WAH!
SHHHK SHHHK
THUMP

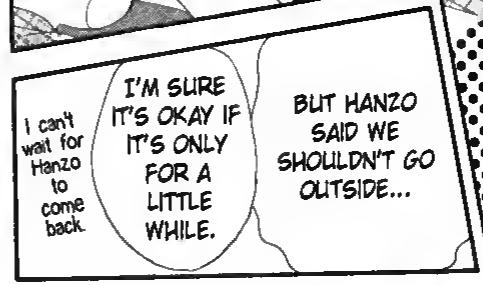
JUMP
I CAN'T WAIT TO HAVE LISA'S SESAME DUMPLINGS... ♪
JUMP


HEY...
YIP YIP

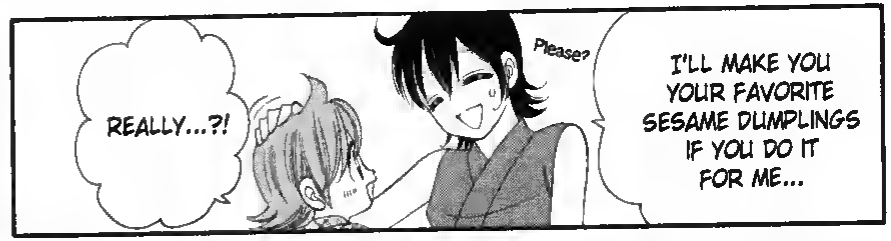
YIP
YIP

YIP
USA-MARU!!
YIP
TUP
WAIT...

WHAAAT ?!
I WANT YOU TO GO AND JUST PICK ANY HERB YOU CAN FIND...
MA-MEZO...
SLUMP


I can't wait for Hanzo to come back.
I'M SURE IT'S OKAY IF IT'S ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
BUT HANZO SAID WE SHOULDN'T GO OUTSIDE...

EEEEEP!
COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE NEVER MADE MEDICINE FOR EYES BEFORE.
AND THERE ISN'T ANYBODY I CAN ASK HERE! PLUS I DON'T HAVE ANY OF THE BASIC HERBS WITH ME, EITHER!!


REALLY...?!
Please?
I'LL MAKE YOU YOUR FAVORITE SESAME DUMPLINGS IF YOU DO IT FOR ME...

BE CAREFUL!
DASH
SEE YOU LATER! ♪

USE THIS.
Y- YEAH... UH...
YOU'RE NOT USED TO DOGS, ARE YOU?
BMP
BMP
LICK
LICK
TMP TMP
GRIN
?
WHISTLE...?
FHU...
YAP YAP
WHAT IS IT?
A DOG WHISTLE.

GOOD BOY, GOOD BOY.
YIP
USAMARU...
TREMBLE
LICK
LICK
WE GOT SEPARATED YESTER-DAY...
UH-HUH...
IS THIS YOUR DOG?
OH...

Hmm...
WHAT'S TAKING MAMEZO SO LONG...?
WHERE DID HE GO TO COLLECT THOSE HERBS?
SILENCE...
THIS PLACE DOESN'T HAVE ANY OF THE INGREDIENTS I NEED TO MAKE SESAME DUMPLINGS!!
JOLT
MAYBE HE GOT CAUGHT BY THOSE MEN WORKING FOR NOBUNAGA?!
COULD IT BE...!!
SHFF
!!
SHFF
DID THEY FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS PLACE TOO?!
SHOOM
AAAGH!

CAN I REALLY HAVE THIS?
TH... THAT'S REALLY SOME-THING...
Don't howl like that.
ARR...
ARWHOO...
PEOPLE CAN'T HEAR IT. IT'S A WHISTLE THAT ONLY DOGS CAN HEAR.
IT'S NOT MAKING ANY SOUND.
YAP
YAP
YAP
I CAN ALWAYS MAKE ANOTHER ONE.
SURE.
I'M WATARI.
SMILE
THANK YOU...
BEAM
I'M MAMEZO.

MPH
MPH
WHY WON'T IT OPEN?!
H-HEY...
I MUST HAVE IMAGINED IT...

...BROKEN ?!
THE REVOLVING DOOR IS...

ZWAK
SOME-BODY, HELP ME...!
BAM
BAM
IT WON'T OPEN!!
HANZO ?!

BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP
I'M SORRY, MAMEZO...
PLEASE BE SAFE ...!!
BA-BUMP
I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET MAMEZO OUT...
BA-BUMP

BA-BUMP
...BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH THE SECRET PATH, EITHER...
I DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE...
BA-BUMP
BA-BUMP

ONE HOUR LATER
...
MAYBE IT WASN'T NOBUNAGA'S MEN...?

...BUT IT LOOKS AS IF SOMEBODY IS LIVING HERE.
RANMARU?!
THAT VOICE...

HANZ...
THIS HOUSE IS SUPPOSED TO BE EMPTY...

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AS A RAKUGO STORYTELLER!"

-CHIE, TOCHIGI PREFECTURE

IF I WAS IN THE AUDIENCE, I'D BE TOO BUSY ADMIRING HANZO'S GOOD LOOKS TO LAUGH AT HIS STORY. HE'D PROBABLY BE MAD AT ME FOR NOT LISTENING...
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
HOW DARE YOU LAUGH WHILE I'M TALKING TO YOU!!
HANZO'S HANDSOME EVEN WHEN HE'S ANGRY...
THIS IS GOING TO BE ONE OF THOSE RIDICULOUS STORIES, AND...
!!

ARE THERE ANY CLUES THAT WOULD HELP US?
PLEASE LEAVE!!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
I SENSE SOMEBODY BEHIND THIS WALL...
HMM?

RANMARU!!
SOMEBODY SEEMS TO HAVE USED THE KITCHEN.
WILL YOU GO AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND ASK ABOUT THE PERSON WHO LIVES HERE?

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
MITSUHIDE IS THE LAST PERSON TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
MAYBE HE'S GOT A SECRET LOVER?
I NEVER KNEW MITSUHIDE HAD A SAFE HOUSE IN THE CITY...

PHEW
IT LOOKS LIKE USAGI AND HANZO HAVE SAFELY ESCAPED...
MITSUHIDE, HELP ME...
SOB
SOB
Where are you?
IS THAT YOU, USAGI?
RANMARU AND THE OTHERS HAVE GONE...
I CAN'T GET OUT...

STOMP
STOMP
TWITCH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
REALLY, MITSUHIDE ?!
THIS IS MY SAFE HOUSE!!
I'M SO SORRY! I HAD NO IDEA!!
KNEEL
I DID AGREE TO HELP HUNT THE IGA NINJA DOWN...
...BUT LOOKING FOR THEM IN SUCH A FORCEFUL MANNER IS ONLY GOING TO BRING ABOUT ILL FEELINGS AMONGST THE CIVILIANS.
I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL...

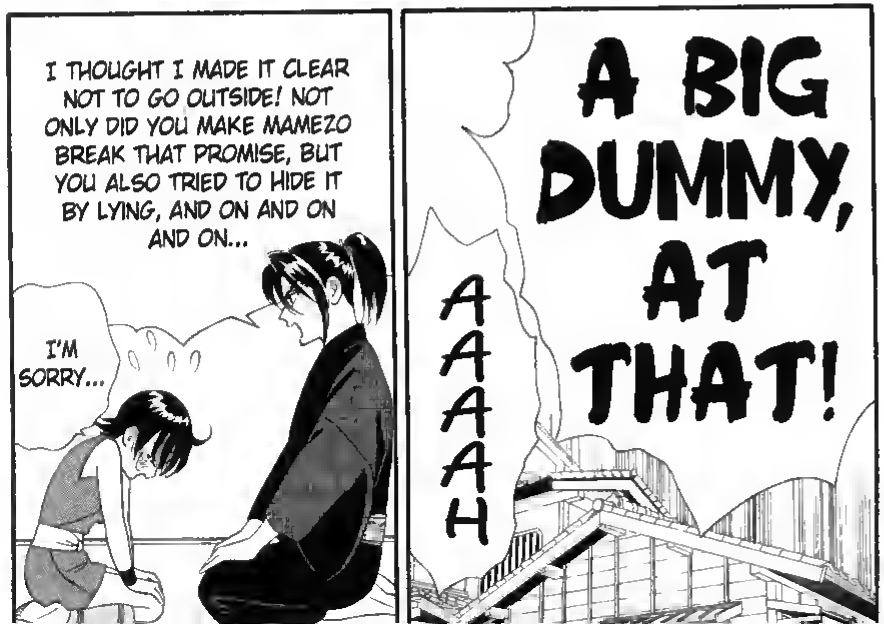
UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (18)

I wasn't sure if going to a school with an art department was going to help me find a job in the future, but I had a passion for drawing ever since I was young. My desire to learn more techniques grew stronger, so I told my mother about my plan. Unfortunately, I got a straight "no" for an answer. The reason was that tuition fees for a private school were too expensive...

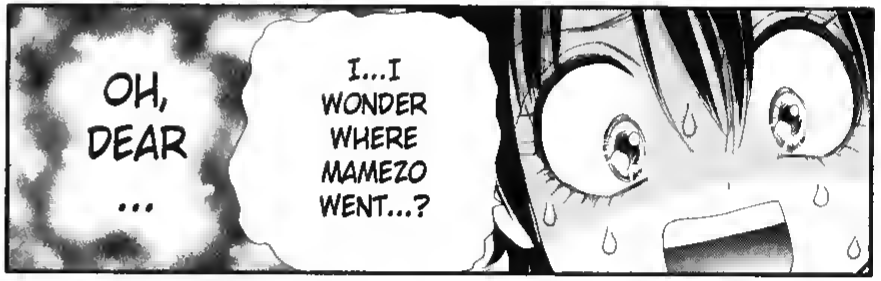
To be sure, going to a private school costs about 1-8 times more than going to a local high school, undoubtedly a big burden for a single-parent family like mine. But I still wanted to learn at an art department! That feeling just kept on growing...

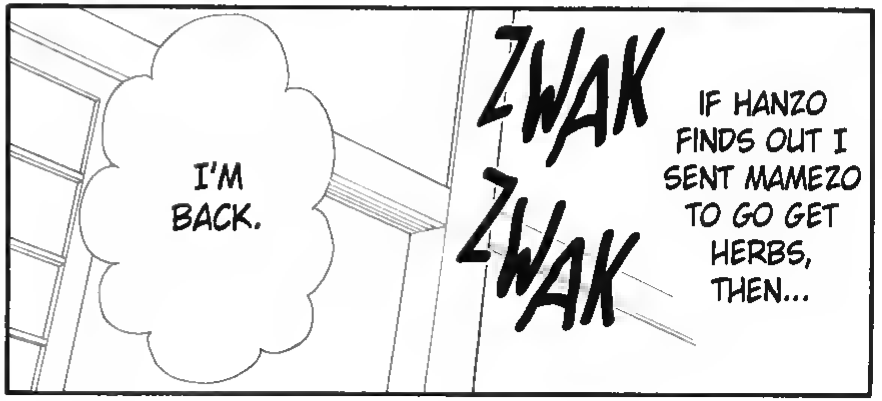
RANMARU...
...IS HUNTING US DOWN?
RANMARU IS VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THIS.
I ADVISE YOU TO BE EXTRA CAREFUL IF YOU'RE GOING AROUND THE CITY.

I FOUND USAMARU, TOO!
TMP
TMP
I PICKED AS MANY HERBS AS I COULD, JUST LIKE YOU TOLD ME TO, USA.
PANT
PANT
YOU'RE THE DUMMY!
NOOO...
YOU DUMMY...


I THOUGHT I MADE IT CLEAR NOT TO GO OUTSIDE! NOT ONLY DID YOU MAKE MAMEZO BREAK THAT PROMISE, BUT YOU ALSO TRIED TO HIDE IT BY LYING, AND ON AND ON AND ON...
I'M SORRY...
A BIG DUMMY, AT THAT!
AAAAH

BA-BUMP
YOU KNOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN MAMEZO AROUND...
HUH?
SHHHK
I'LL DROP BY AGAIN TO SEE YOU LATER.


OH, DEAR ...
I...I WONDER WHERE MAMEZO WENT...?


I'M BACK.
ZWAK ZWAK
IF HANZO FINDS OUT I SENT MAMEZO TO GO GET HERBS, THEN...

I'M GOING TO MAKE A MEDICINE FOR MITSUHIDE'S EYES...
LET'S WORK HARD AND MAKE THAT MEDICINE!!
OK, MAMEZO!
...TO EARN HIS TRUST...
THAT'S POISONOUS !!
MUNCH
BUT DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME, EVERY-BODY!
SOME POISONS WORK AS MEDICINE IF YOU ONLY TAKE SMALL AMOUNTS.
PHEW
...SO WE CAN STOP THE ATTACK ON IGA.

UH...
MAMEZO.
YOU WEREN'T SEEN BY ANYBODY OUTSIDE, WERE YOU?
NEXT TIME YOU NEED HERBS, TELL ME!
YES, SIR...
I'M WATARI.
ANYBODY...?
NO...
NO ONE SAW ME...

BACK AT IGA, I COULD ALWAYS ASK FOR HELP FROM THE OLD PEOPLE AROUND ME...
...OR LOOK AROUND FOR HERBS AND ROOTS MYSELF...
I CAN SEE THAT...
NGH NGH
HAND-STAND ?!
I...
...CAN'T DO THIS ANY-MORE...
BUT I CAN'T CON-TINUE...
...MAKING MEDICINE HERE...
VERY WELL.

USAGI!!
THREE DAYS LATER
I'M BACK...
USA, HANG IN THERE...!!
...SO SHE THOUGHT THAT DOING A HANDSTAND WOULD HELP HER COME UP WITH SOMETHING DIFFERENT. BUT SHE KEPT ON DOING IT...
THE MEDICINE-MAKING WASN'T GOING SO WELL...
SOB
SOB
WAKE UP!
WHAT HAPPENED?!

I'M SO HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO GO OUT WITH YOU... ♡
OKAY...
SEE YOU LATER.
I NEED YOU TO LOOK AFTER THE HOUSE, MAMEZO.
I'LL BUY INGREDIENTS FOR THE SESAME DUMPLINGS, SO BE A GOOD BOY, MAMEZO. ☆
OHOOO

SHOCK
I CAN'T ...?!
DON'T HOLD MY HAND!!

STOP COMPLAINING !!
...SOUNDS WEIRD...
THE NAME USAEMON...
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A MAN NAMED USAEMON TODAY.
OF COURSE NOT.

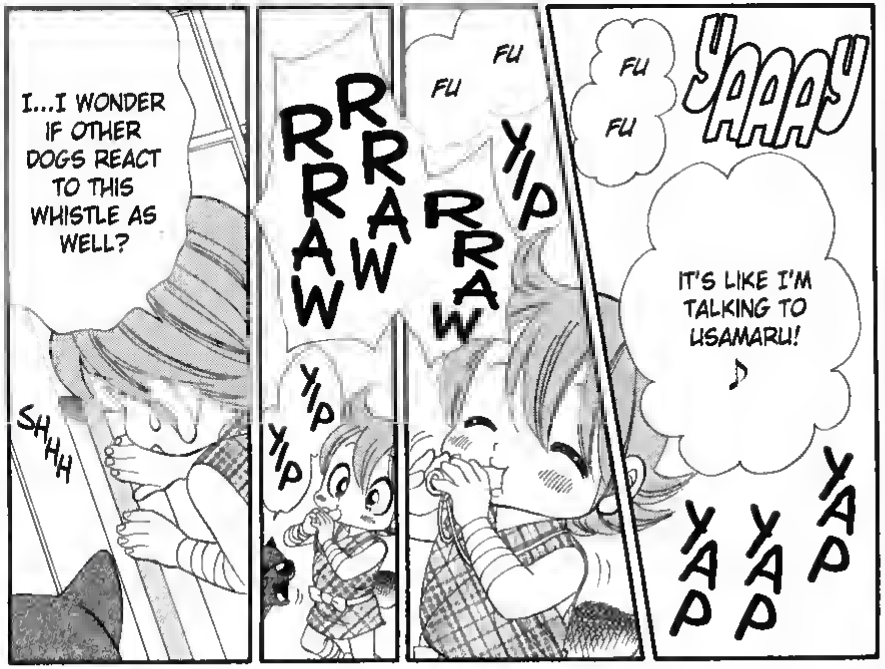
LOOKING AROUND THE SHOP MIGHT HELP STIMULATE YOUR IMAGINATION.
YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ME TO A MEDICINE SHOP IN THE CITY?
USA, YOU LOOK LIKE A MAN.

ERK.
HURRAY HURRAY

CAN I COME TOO?
HANZO...
FLATTEN YOUR CHEST WITH SOME CLOTH OR SOMETHING!!

YIP!
FHUU
WICH
I KNOW!

YAP
YAP
YIP
FHUU
FU FU

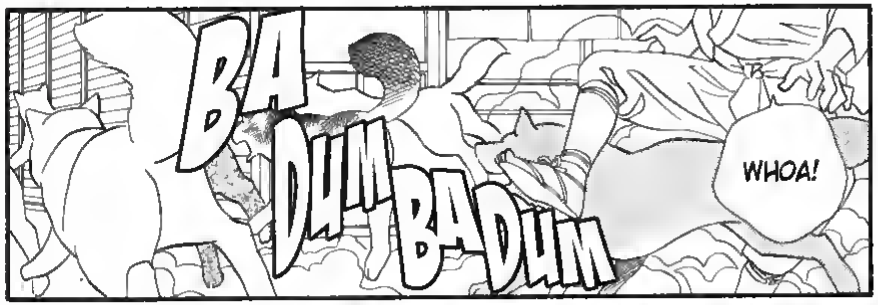

I...I WONDER IF OTHER DOGS REACT TO THIS WHISTLE AS WELL?
SHHH
RRRAW
RRRAW
YIP
YIP
FU FU
FU FU
YAAAY
IT'S LIKE I'M TALKING TO USAMARU! ♪
YAP
YAP
YAP

WIPE
WIPE
WIPE
WIPE

AWW... THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO DO...
SPARKLE
SPARKLE

I GUESS I'LL CLEAN THE HOUSE WHILE I WAIT. ♪
USA-MARU...
USA-MARU...
DON'T BITE THE SANDALS...
I HOPE USA COMES BACK SOON...
CHOMP
CHOMP

FREEZE
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY DOGS...?
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF

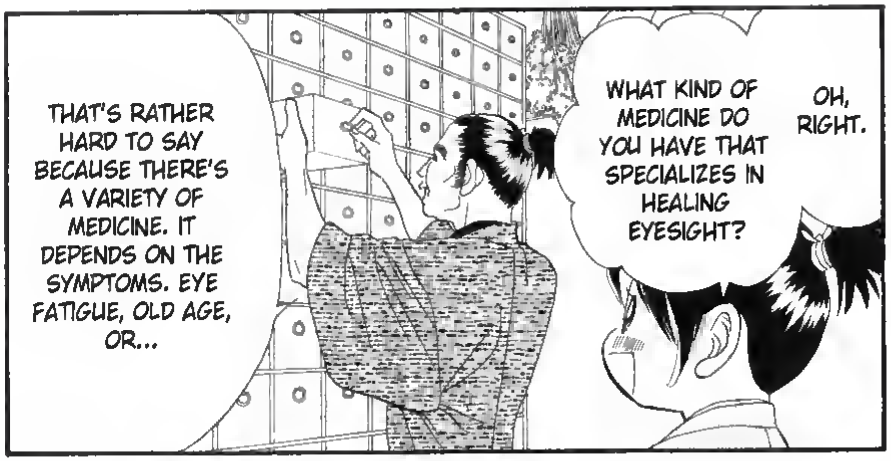

BA DUM BA DUM
WHOA!

SHA
BADUMBADUM

RRRAW
RRRAW
RRRAW
WOOF
WOOF
WOOF
YIP YIP
VROOM
AAAAAAGH

YOU'RE KIND OF DUMB, AREN'T YOU...
I...I DON'T KNOW...
"YOU MUST CALL ME FATHER."
MY DAD...?
"DON'T LET ANYONE FIND OUT YOU'RE A NINJA."
CAN I DROP BY YOUR HOUSE AGAIN, MAMEZO?
OH WELL.
SURE!!
OH...
ACTUALLY, NO...!
YOU JUST CAN'T...
WHY NOT?
I'LL GO FIND YOU WHEN I WANT TO PLAY WITH YOU...OK?

SHIVER
SHIVER
DON'T USE THE DOG WHISTLE INSIDE THE HOUSE.
WATAAAAARIIII!
LEAP
I'VE SENT THE DOGS AWAY.
THANK YOU, THANK YOU...!
WAAH!
SNIFF
SNIFF
HUH?
WHAT DOES YOUR DAD DO?
IT'S A NICE PLACE.
IS THIS YOUR HOUSE, MAMEZO?


OH, RIGHT.
WHAT KIND OF MEDICINE DO YOU HAVE THAT SPECIALIZES IN HEALING EYESIGHT?
THAT'S RATHER HARD TO SAY BECAUSE THERE'S A VARIETY OF MEDICINE. IT DEPENDS ON THE SYMPTOMS. EYE FATIGUE, OLD AGE, OR...

THEN CAN YOU GIVE ME EVERYTHING THAT'S AVAILABLE?!
S... SURE...
Every-thing?

AND CAN YOU ALSO TELL ME WHAT ALL THE INGREDIENTS ARE? ♡
!

OOOOOH...
MEDICINE SHOP

ARE THESE ALL... MEDICINE?!
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
WHAT'S THIS POWDER?
IT'S DEER HORN. IT HAS A REFRESHING EFFECT ON THE BODY.
WHAT ABOUT THIS?!
THAT'S SNAPPING TURTLE. IT'S USED FOR REVITALIZATION AS WELL...
I like the sound of that!
SNAPPING TURTLE...
DON'T FORGET WHAT WE'RE HERE FOR.

I'M LOOKING FOR SOME PEOPLE.
DO YOU RECOGNIZE THESE FACES?
RANMARU!!

SHA
DO YOU WANT ME TO WRITE THE NAMES DOWN ON A PIECE OF PAPER...?
HUH?

TUG
WELL...
OH!

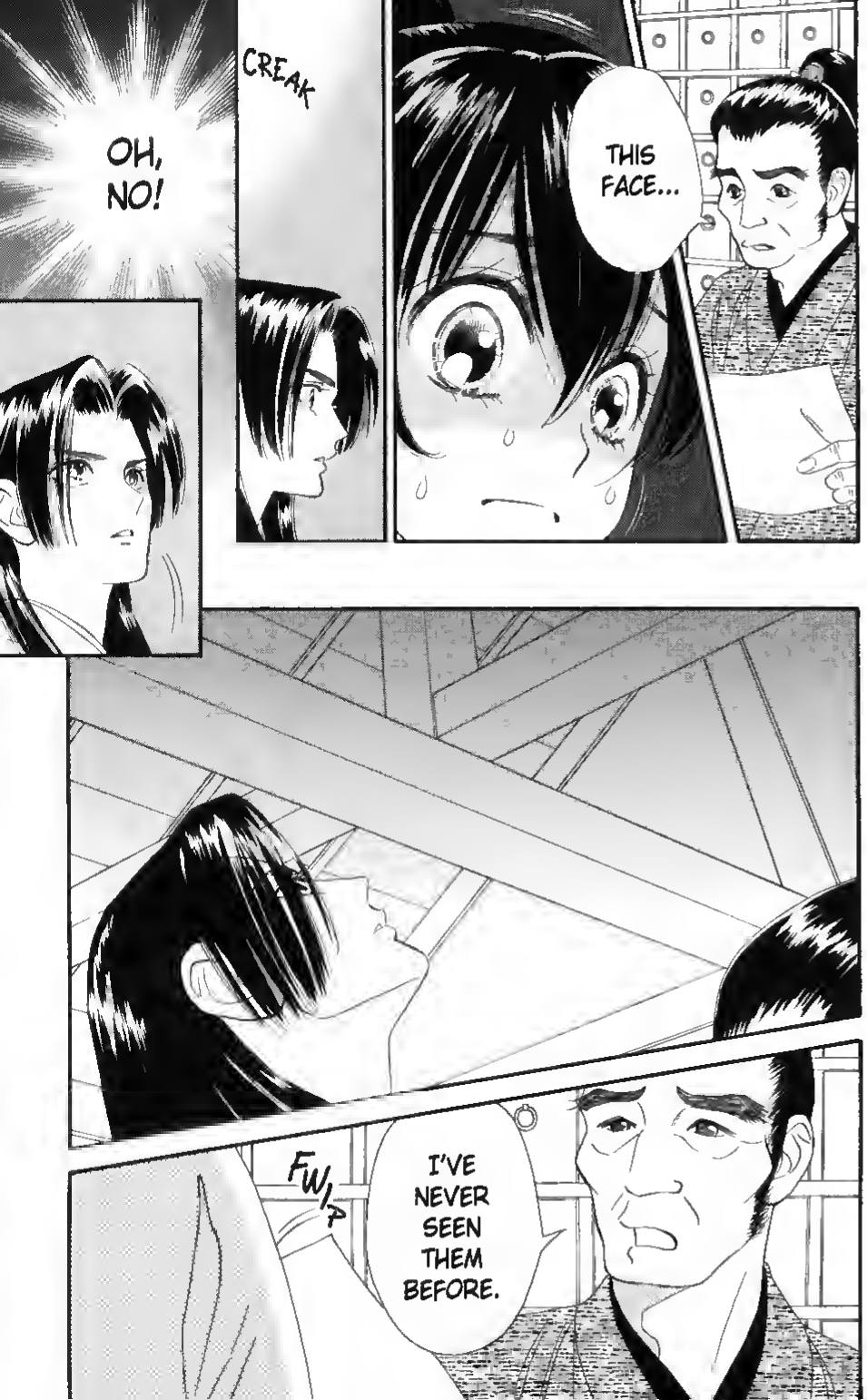
WHAT'S GOING ON...?
EXCUSE ME!
HANZO?!
SHH!
SIR?

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AS A FATHER!!"

☆POOH☆, FUKUOKA PREFECTURE

IF HANZO'S WAS MY FATHER, I'D ALWAYS BE FILIAL TO HIM!
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
I'LL NEVER GIVE UP!!
I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE UP...
...ARE LONG GONE ...
...YOU WISH TO BE A GOOD CHILD, YOUR PARENTS ...
BY THE TIME ...
TEE HEE
I LOVE CROWDED TRAINS. ♡

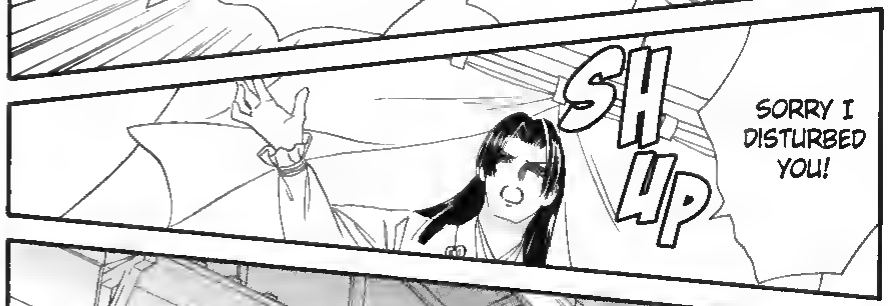

OH, NO!
CREAK
THIS FACE...
FWIP
I'VE NEVER SEEN THEM BEFORE.

THE MAN IS ABOUT 20 YEARS OLD, AND THE GIRL IS ABOUT 15.
DO YOU RECOGNIZE THEM?

HANZO...
IT'S OKAY...
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
THE IGA NINJA AREN'T THAT EASY TO FIND, YOU KNOW.

LOOK AT THE FACES MORE CAREFULLY!!

I'VE GOT CUSTOMERS TO TEND TO, BUT YOU'VE MANAGED TO SEND THEM AWAY...
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW.


SHUP
SORRY I DISTURBED YOU!

IT'S A TABOO IN OUR SOCIETY...
...TO SELL OUT OTHER NINJA.
I PROMISE YOU THAT YOU'LL GET THE RESULTS YOU WANT.
YOU JUST DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT, THAT'S ALL...
THE KOUGA NINJA HAVE BEEN COMBING THE CAPITAL EVER SINCE YOU ORDERED US TO LOOK FOR THEM.
BUT WE STILL RISKED ACCEPTING THIS JOB FROM YOU.

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME?!
LEAVE THE NINJA TO US NINJA.
YOU...
NINJA...
...DON'T WORK IN FRONT OF OTHER PEOPLE.

REALLY?
YOU SAW KAME?!
I'M SURE IT WAS HER.
SO WHO IS THIS KAME?
SHE'S BEEN MY BEST FRIEND SINCE CHILDHOOD.
"USA..."

WALK WITH YOUR HEAD RAISED!
PEOPLE WHO ARE FRIGHTENED TEND TO STAND OUT MORE.
B-BUMP
B-BUMP
...SOMEBODY MIGHT BE SPYING ON US...
BUT...
HEY...

Good grief
SHE'S GONE...
LET'S GO HOME.
HUH?!
I THOUGHT I JUST SAW SOME-BODY WHO LOOKED LIKE KAME...
RUB RUB
WHAT'S WRONG?

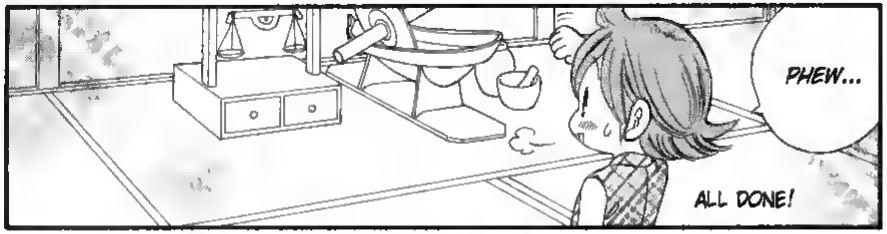
I HAVE TO DO MY BEST TOO!!
MAYBE...
MAYBE KAME IS WORKING HARD TO STOP THE ATTACK ON IGA...
ALL RIGHT, LET'S MAKE THAT MEDICINE!!
SHUP

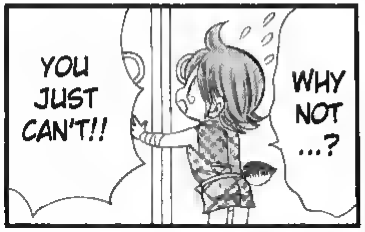
I WANT TO SEE KAME...
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE THIS SUMMER WHEN SHE QUALIFIED AND LEFT FOR AN ASSIGNMENT AT THE CAPITAL...
NO.
HEY, HANZO...
ME TOO...
YOU WERE GOING TO ASK, "CAN I GO AND SEE KAME?" OR SOMETHING TO THAT EXTENT, RIGHT?
BUT I HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING YET...
OH-KAAAY...
DON'T MAKE ANY THOUGHTLESS MOVES!
YOU JUST SAW RANMARU LOOKING AROUND FOR US, DIDN'T YOU?
BUMP

DUST DUST
SWEEP
SWEEP

KLAK
ZWAK

TMP
TMP
OKAY...
I'M GOING TO KEEP THIS DOOR CLOSED BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO BE DUSTY IN THERE.


PHEW...
ALL DONE!


YOU JUST CAN'T!!
WHY NOT ...?

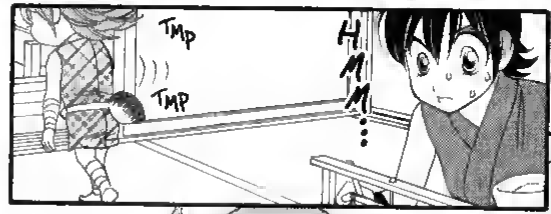
Sob

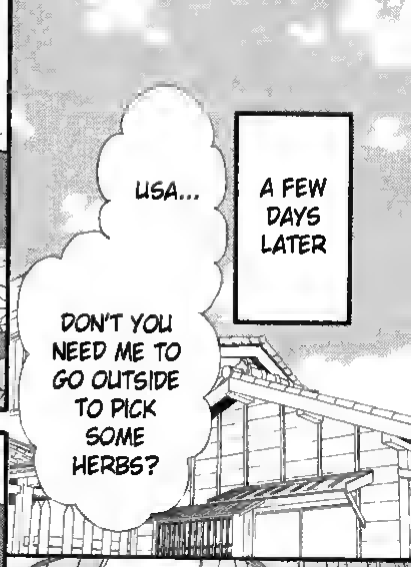
MAMEZO...
ZZZ

ZWAK
OHH!

DON'T OPEN THE DOOR YET!!
I'VE FINI...
SHH

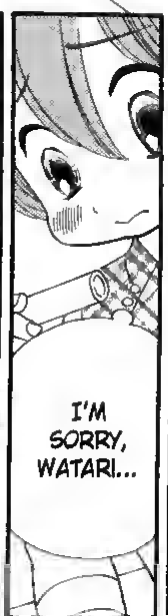
SHOCK
NOPE.
I'VE ASKED HANZO TO GET THEM FOR ME.
HM...


TMP
TMP
HMM...

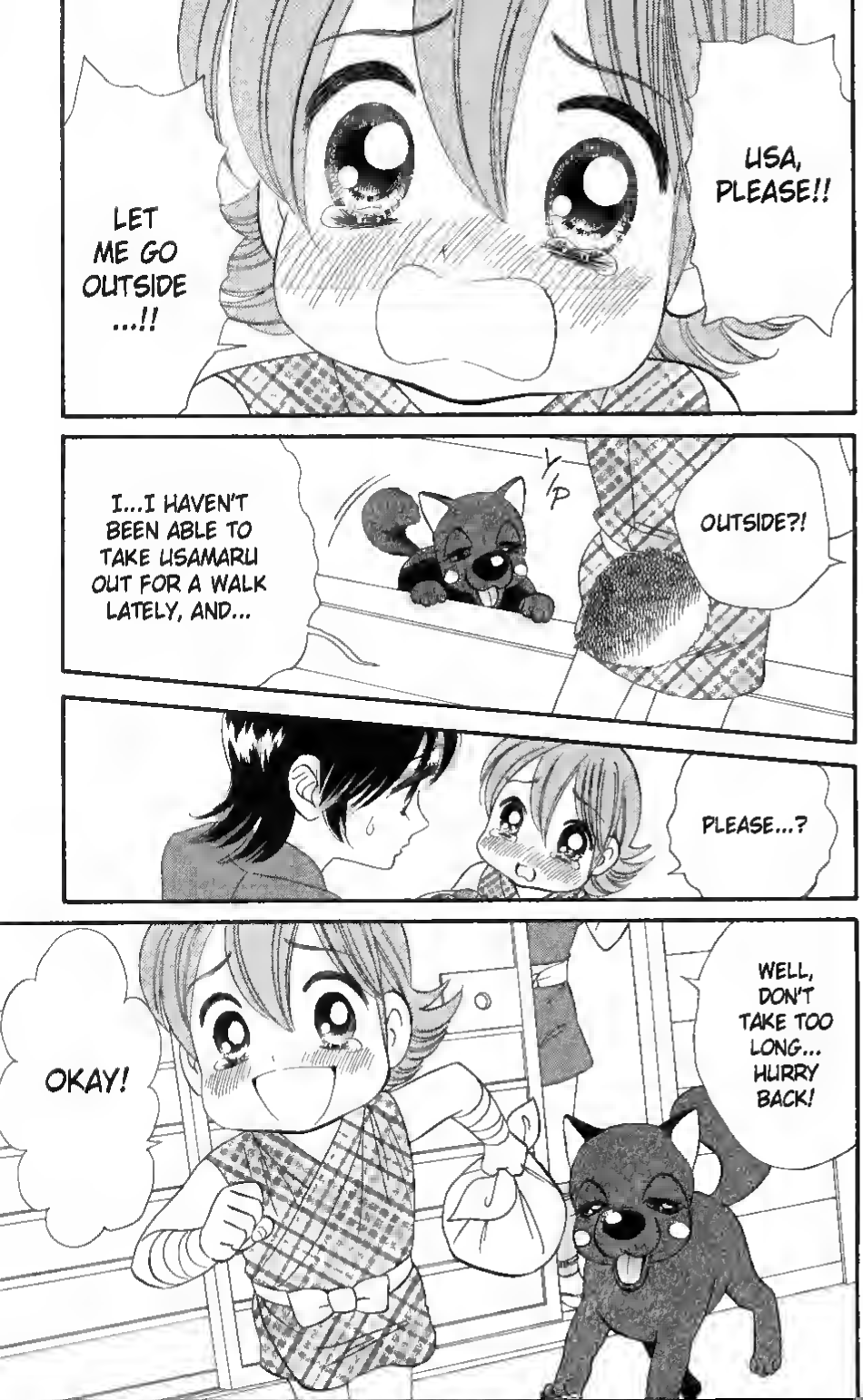

A FEW DAYS LATER
USA...
DON'T YOU NEED ME TO GO OUTSIDE TO PICK SOME HERBS?

Sigh

MAMEZO...
WHAT?!
TH-THUMP
THE ROOM'S GOTTEN A BIT MESSY. DO YOU MIND CLEANING IT FOR ME?
SWIP


I'M SORRY, WATARI...

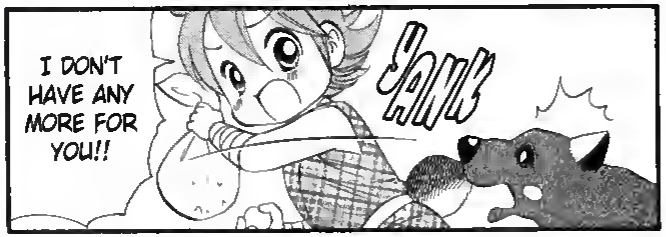
AW...
I CAN'T GO AND PLAY WITH WATARI NOW...

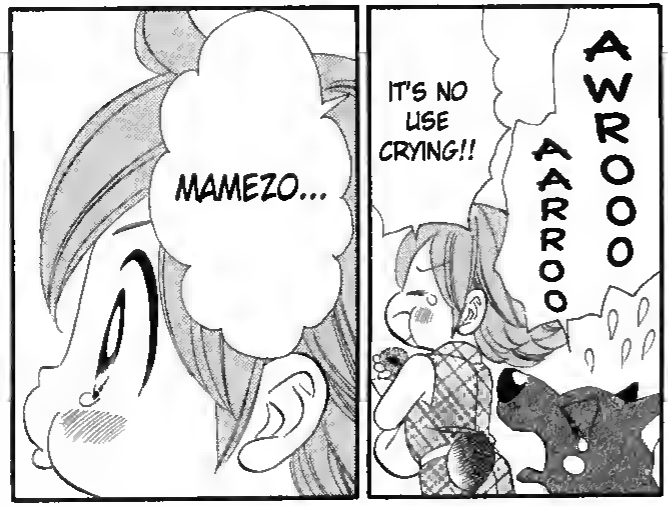

LET ME GO OUTSIDE ...!!
USA, PLEASE!!
I...I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TAKE USAMARU OUT FOR A WALK LATELY, AND...
OUTSIDE?!
PLEASE...?
OKAY!
WELL, DON'T TAKE TOO LONG... HURRY BACK!

HM?
SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING.
OOOH!
HERE ARE THE SESAME DUMPLINGS I PROMISED YOU! ♡
SWEET THINGS ARE GOOD FOR YOU WHEN YOU'RE TIRED...
WHAT'S WRONG? GO AHEAD AND EAT UP!
This one's for Hanzo and me ♡
THIS ONE'S YOURS, MAMEZO.
THANK YOU!!
GRAB!

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (19)

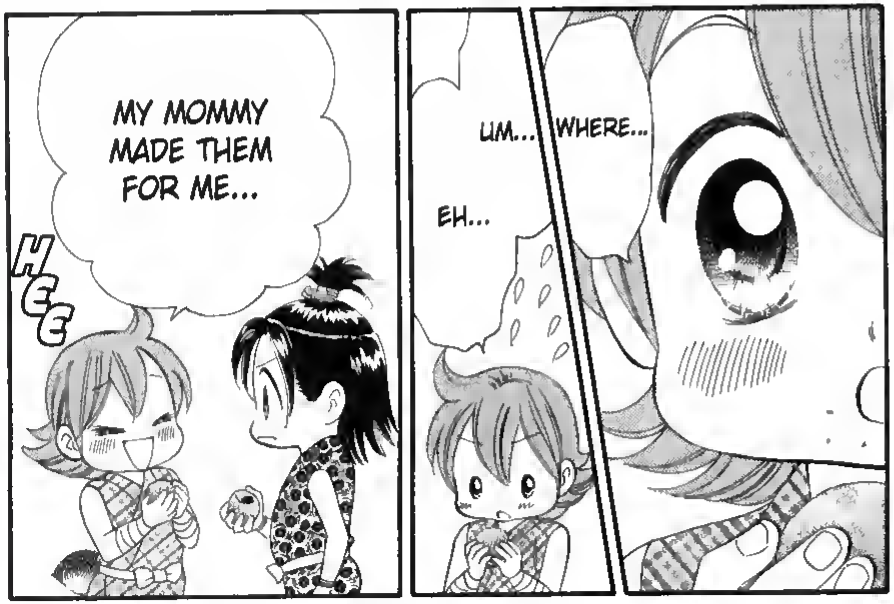
During the wintertime when I was getting close to my school application deadline, I got a phone call from the editorial office telling me that I was finally going to make my debut. Even though I was happy, it didn't seem real. I just stood there in a daze. But in my mind, I secretly raised my arms up in triumph, thinking, "Maybe now I have a reason for applying to a school with an art department!"





GULP
I'M GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER ONE TOO. ♪
MNCH

WHERE DID YOU GET THIS SESAME DUMPLING?
MNCH
YEF...?
MNCH
MA... MAMEZO...


MY MOMMY MADE THEM FOR ME...
HEE
UM... EH...
WHERE...

WHAT'S THAT?
THAT'S OKAY.
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T COME...
I THOUGHT I'D SHARE THIS WITH YOU.
OH, THIS...

I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE EVERY DAY SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.
TMP
TMP
WATARI!!

IT'S REALLY GOOD...
MMM...
AAAAH
SESAME DUMPLINGS! ♪

THEY'RE MY FAVORITE... ♡
!!

I'M HOME...
DID YOU HAVE FUN OUTSIDE?
HEY, MAMEZO...
SHHHK
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU SOUND SAD...
UH-HUH...

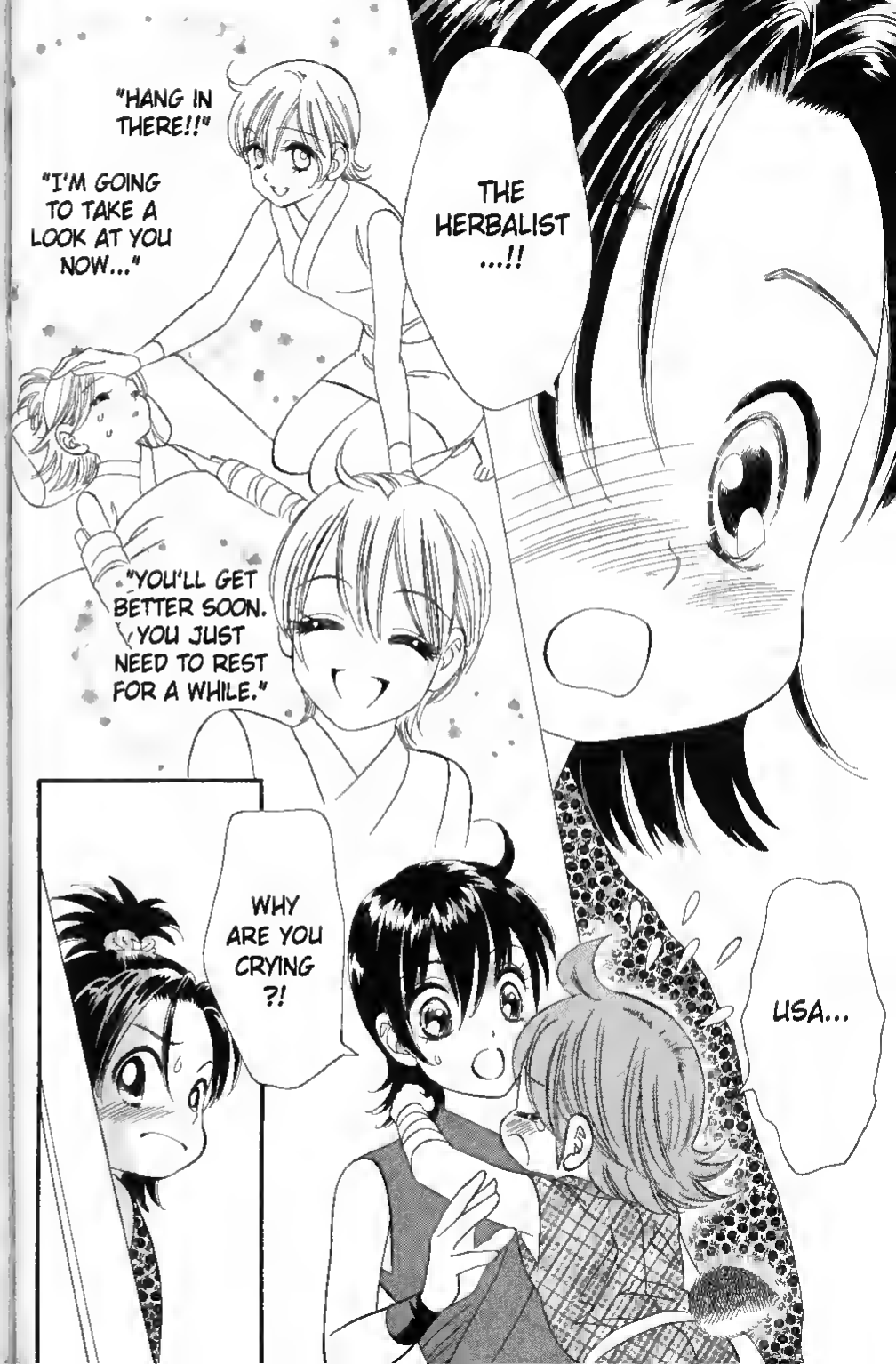
HUUUH?!
SEE YOU LATER!
VIP
WATARI, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TODAY?
SORRY. I'VE GOT SOME-THING I HAVE TO DO.
HMM...

TAP TAP

SIGH...

LATER...
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHEN I'M GOING TO BE ABLE TO COME OUTSIDE AGAIN...

MASTER...
MASTER ...?!
DASH
FWISH
!!
VISH
VISH


"HANG IN THERE!!"
"I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT YOU NOW..."
THE HERBALIST ...!!
"YOU'LL GET BETTER SOON. YOU JUST NEED TO REST FOR A WHILE."
WHY ARE YOU CRYING ?!
USA...

KLANG
AH.
I'VE...
...FOUND THE IGA NINJA.
WELL DONE...
...WATARI.

WHOA!
THUK
THUK
AH!

I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO CALL ME "DAD" WHILE WE'RE IN THE CAPITAL.
OWW...
FWUMP
NO EXCUSES.
BUT I WANTED TO TELL YOU QUICKLY...
OUCH...
I'M SORRY.

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 62

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO IN A RABBIT COSTUME!"

-KAOTAMU, IBARAKI PREFECTURE

MAMEZO'S BEEN LIKE THAT EVER SINCE HE CAME BACK FROM HIS WALK WITH USAMARU.
Oww
WALK?
WHAM
AAGH!
HM?
PRAISE ME! PRAISE ME!
SIGH...
YOU LOOK DEPRESSED. WHAT'S THE MATTER?

I WENT OUTSIDE... I'M SORRY...
LET'S HAVE A CHAT.
HANZO...
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A MAN-TO-MAN TALK OUTSIDE.

HUFF
HUFF
FINALLY!
I FINISHED MAKING MITSUHIDE'S EYE MEDICINE!!
USAGI!
WELL DONE!!
HANZO!!

I WANT TO SEE WATARI MORE OFTEN...
...BUT I CAN'T...
THAT'S FINE.
PHEW
MA-MEZO...
I WANT YOU TO THINK OF THE KANJI CHARACTER FOR "NINJA."
ALL NINJA MUST REMAIN CALM AT HEART, EVEN WHEN A SHARP BLADE IS BEING POINTED AT YOU.
A "HEART"...
...AND A "SWORD"?
NO, IT'S "BLADE."

A FRIEND...?
MA-MEZO...
DID YOU SAY ANYTHING ABOUT US...?
NO...
OH!
BUT I DID TELL HIM THAT USA AND YOU ARE MY MOMMY AND DADDY...
HIS NAME'S WATARI, AND HE'S REALLY KIND.

ONLY BY ENDURING DIFFICULTIES...
...CAN PEOPLE BECOME STRONG.
WHAT DID YOU TWO TALK ABOUT?
IT'S A SECRET...
TELL ME ...!!
DON'T...
DON'T PICK ON MAMEZO!
Tickle Tickle
ALL RIGHT.
I WANT YOU TO DELIVER THIS LETTER TO MASTER TANBA.
MA-MEZO.
OKAY...

THAT IS WHAT MY LATE FATHER TAUGHT ME.
NINJA ARE NOT NORMAL HUMANS.
WE LIVE FOR THE PEOPLE...
...AND DIE FOR THE PEOPLE.

D...
...DAD...
SO THERE ARE THREE OF THEM...
STOP COMPLAINING!!
BUT THAT'S BORING!!
TROMP TROMP
THAT LADY DOWN THERE HELPED ME AND MY FRIENDS BACK IN KOUGA.
I DON'T CARE ABOUT THEIR PERSONALITY.
OUR JOB IS TO GET RID OF THE IGA NINJA.
MAMEZO'S A NICE GUY TOO, AND...
SHUT UP.

SHHHK
SEE YOU LATER...!! ♪
I'M GOING TO GIVE MITSUHIDE YOUR MEDICINE NOW.
WHAT ABOUT ME?
YOU CAN GO TO SLEEP.
ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED THIS ASSIGNMENT, I'D LIKE TO MEET YOUR FRIEND.
HANZO, YOU WANT TO MEET WATARI?
NOT AS HANZO...
...BUT AS YOUR FATHER, MAMEZO.
OKAY!!

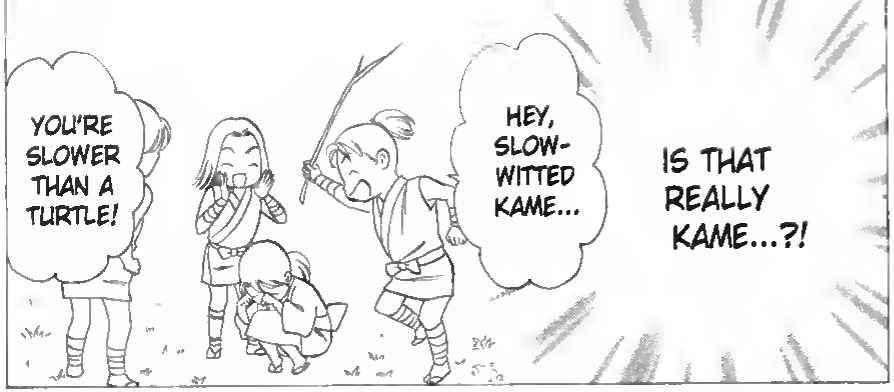
SLAM
MYAAAAKOOOO...
TMP
TMP
AGH!
Oww
I'M SO SORR...
KAME?!
KA...

I HOPE THAT MEDICINE DOES THE TRICK...
MITSUHIDE'S EYES...
LET'S GO.
IF YOU'RE A NINJA, THEN DON'T LET YOUR EMOTIONS TAKE CONTROL.
OH...

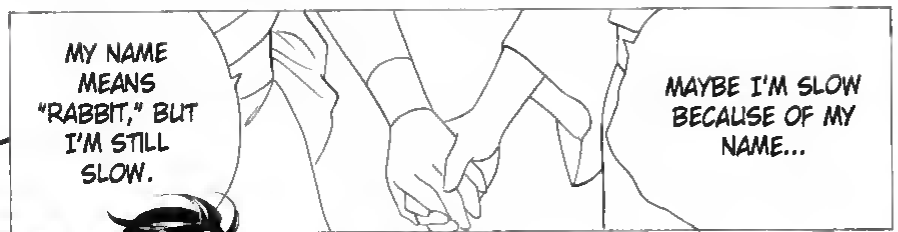
MYAAKO...!!
ZWAK
ZWAK
DASH
HEY, COME BACK HERE...
TWITCH
MYAAKO!

THWAM
...!
USA...
PLEASE LOWER YOUR VOICE!
I APOLOGIZE FOR TREATING YOU ROUGHLY.
I HAVE A DIFFERENT IDENTITY HERE IN THE CAPITAL, SO I COULDN'T TALK TO YOU WHEN YOU CALLED ME BY MY REAL NAME EARLIER.

KAME?!
VIP
KAME...
HEY!
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY?!
I LOST HER...
!!
KAAAAME...!


YOU'RE SLOWER THAN A TURTLE!
HEY, SLOW-WITTED KAME...
IS THAT REALLY KAME...?!

LET'S GO!
IT'S SLOWPOKE USAGI...
WHOA.
HEY!
WAAARGH
I'M GOING TO TELL GREAT-GRANDPA ABOUT THIS!!
STOP IT...!


MY NAME MEANS "RABBIT," BUT I'M STILL SLOW.
MAYBE I'M SLOW BECAUSE OF MY NAME...

SHA
THAT SLOW CRYBABY THAT KAME USED TO BE..! IS SO DIFFERENT NOW..!
OOH...
I'M GOING TO GIVE MYSELF A REALLY NICE NAME WHEN I BECOME A KUNOICHI.

USA!
H... HUH?

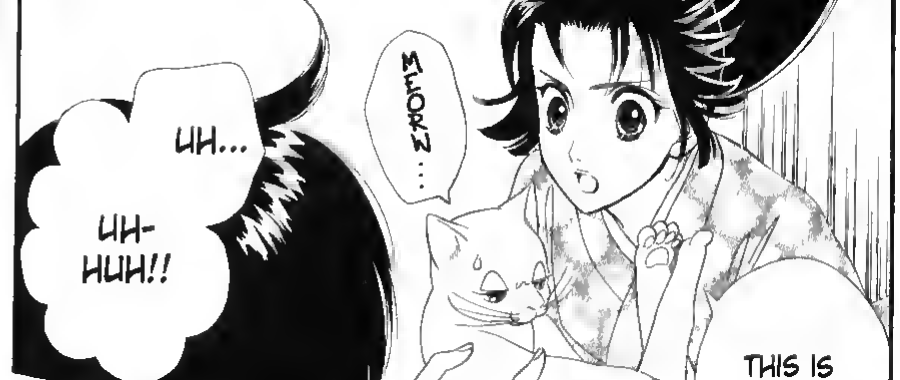
KAME'S BECOME SO PRETTY...
USA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUTSIDE AT A TIME LIKE THIS WITHOUT EVEN A DISGUISE?
OH! I WAS CHASING AFTER MYAAKO...
MYAAKO ?

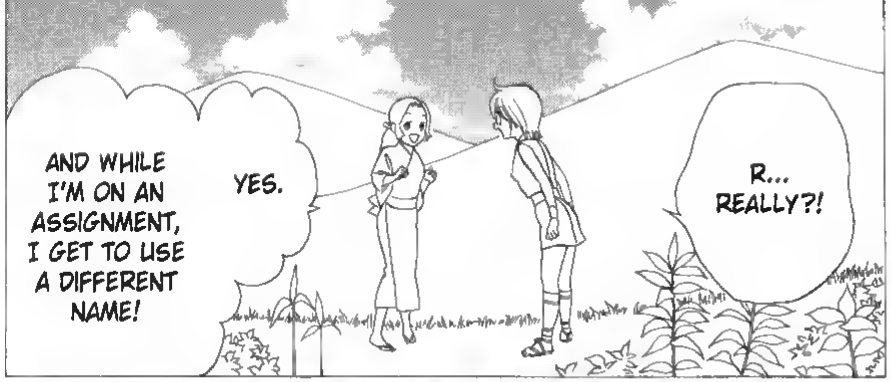
SHUP
IT'S A SIBLING OF THE CAT GREAT-GRANDPA HAS, BUT I'VE LOST TRACK OF IT...
PLEASE WAIT HERE FOR A MINUTE.
WHOA!
JUMP

CAN'T TELL ME?
I HAVE TO GO NOW...
I'M SORRY THAT I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE YOU OFF.
KAME...
TAKE CARE, USA.
WE'RE FRIENDS
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO TALK LIKE THAT TO ME?

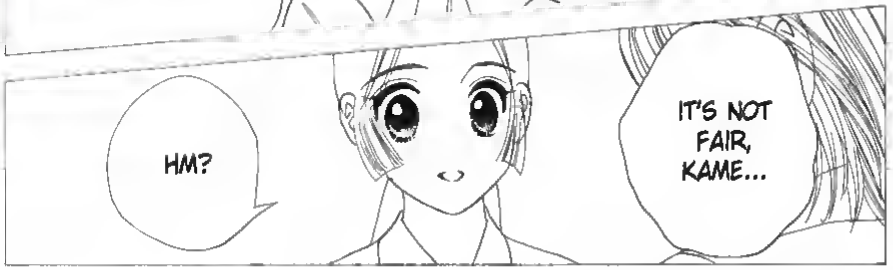
ARE YOU STILL MAD AT ME...?

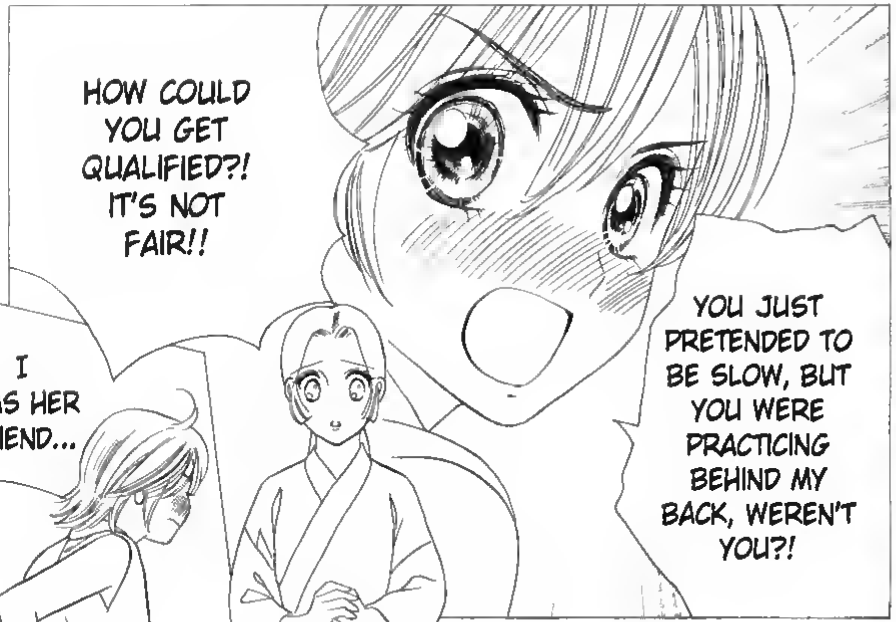
KAME...




AND WHILE I'M ON AN ASSIGNMENT, I GET TO USE A DIFFERENT NAME!
YES.
R... REALLY?!

PLEASE HELP ME THINK OF A NEW NAME, USA.


HM?
IT'S NOT FAIR, KAME...


HOW COULD YOU GET QUALIFIED?! IT'S NOT FAIR!!
YOU JUST PRETENDED TO BE SLOW, BUT YOU WERE PRACTICING BEHIND MY BACK, WEREN'T YOU?!
I WAS HER FRIEND...

RUB RUB
MEORW
WHAT...
YOU'RE STILL AWAKE?

WERE YOU OUTSIDE WHILE I WAS AWAY, USAGI?
WHEN DID YOU FIND MYAAKO ...?
MEORW
...YES.

USAGI...?
WHAT ?!
YOU'VE BEEN QUALIFIED AS A NINJA?!

GIVE ME ANY ASSIGNMENT YOU'VE GOT!!
I DON'T WANT TO STAY PUT AT HOME!!
"THERE IS AN ABANDONED TEMPLE AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN THAT'S SOUTHWEST OF HERE."
"I NEED YOU TO CHECK THE ALIGNMENT OF THAT RICE."
"INSIDE THAT TEMPLE, YOU'LL FIND A LINE OF FIVE-COLORED RICE THAT WE USE TO SEND MESSAGES TO EACH OTHER."
I WANT TO CATCH UP TO KAME.
WHEN KAME HEADED OUT TO THE CAPITAL FOR HER ASSIGNMENT, I GAVE HER A GOOD-LUCK CHARM TO MAKE UP, BUT...
USAGI...
HANZO, PLEASE!!
...AND I COULDN'T HELP SAYING...
...ALL THOSE MEAN WORDS TO HER.
...BUT SHE BEAT ME AT GETTING QUALIFIED. FEELINGS OF FRUSTRATION AND MISERY BECAME MIXED UP INSIDE OF ME...

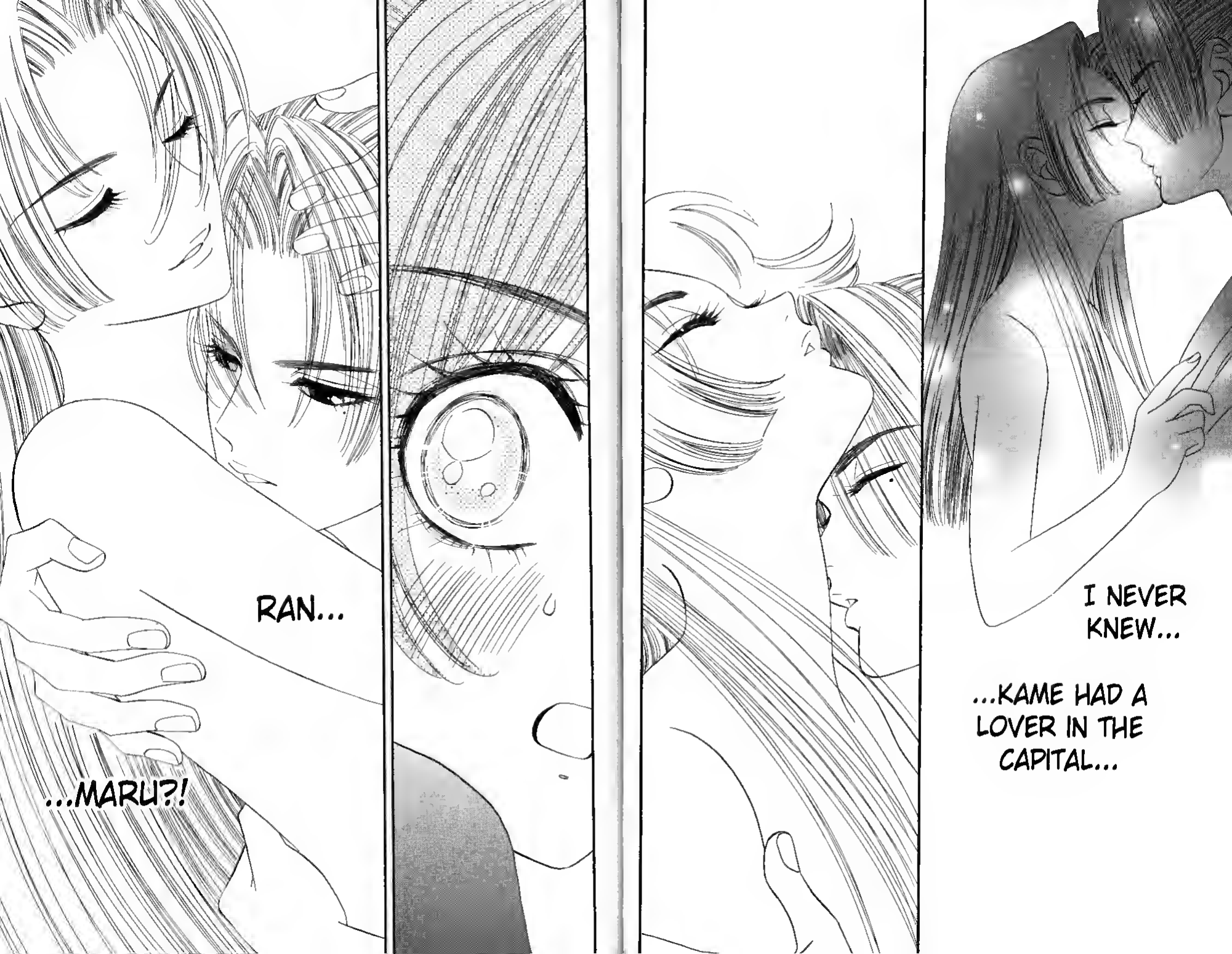
UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (20)

All the award money I won from manga submissions as well as the pay I received for my debut manga went straight to my mother's bank account. I persuaded my mom to use that money for my private school tuition, so I finally succeeded in getting permission to apply to the art department. Around that time, I got another phone call from the editorial office telling me that although I was going to make my debut, the one-shot that had won the debut award was too amateurish. They wanted me to redraw it, which really surprised me.

THAT KIMONO PATTERN ...
MMM...
KAME ...?!

CAN IT BE...
...THAT THE ENEMY FOLLOWED ME?
COME OVER HERE.
HUH?!
CHUCKLE

SHUP
MM...
WHAT...
IT'S JUST OH... A COUPLE CUDDLING TOGETHER ...
PHEW


RAN...
...MARU?!
I NEVER KNEW...
...KAME HAD A LOVER IN THE CAPITAL...

Tail of the Moon

Chapter 63

TAIL OF THE MOON EXTRA: TODAY'S MISSION

"I WANT TO SEE HANZO AND HANZOU IN SHINSENGUMI CLOTHES!"

-MAIKO KOTAKEMORI, OKAYAMA PREFECTURE

THEY BOTH LOOK SO COOL... ♡ I'D BE MORE THAN WILLING TO BE LOYAL TO HANZO!!
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE YOUR NAME...
ER...
I'll explain it to you later.
誠
MY NAME ISN'T "SINCERITY," IT'S HANZO.

SINCE WHEN...?!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
RANMARU IS OUR ENEMY...!!
CREAK
I...
...JUST HEARD A NOISE OVER THERE...
WHAT'S WRONG?

KAME AND RANMARU...
...ARE LOVERS?!

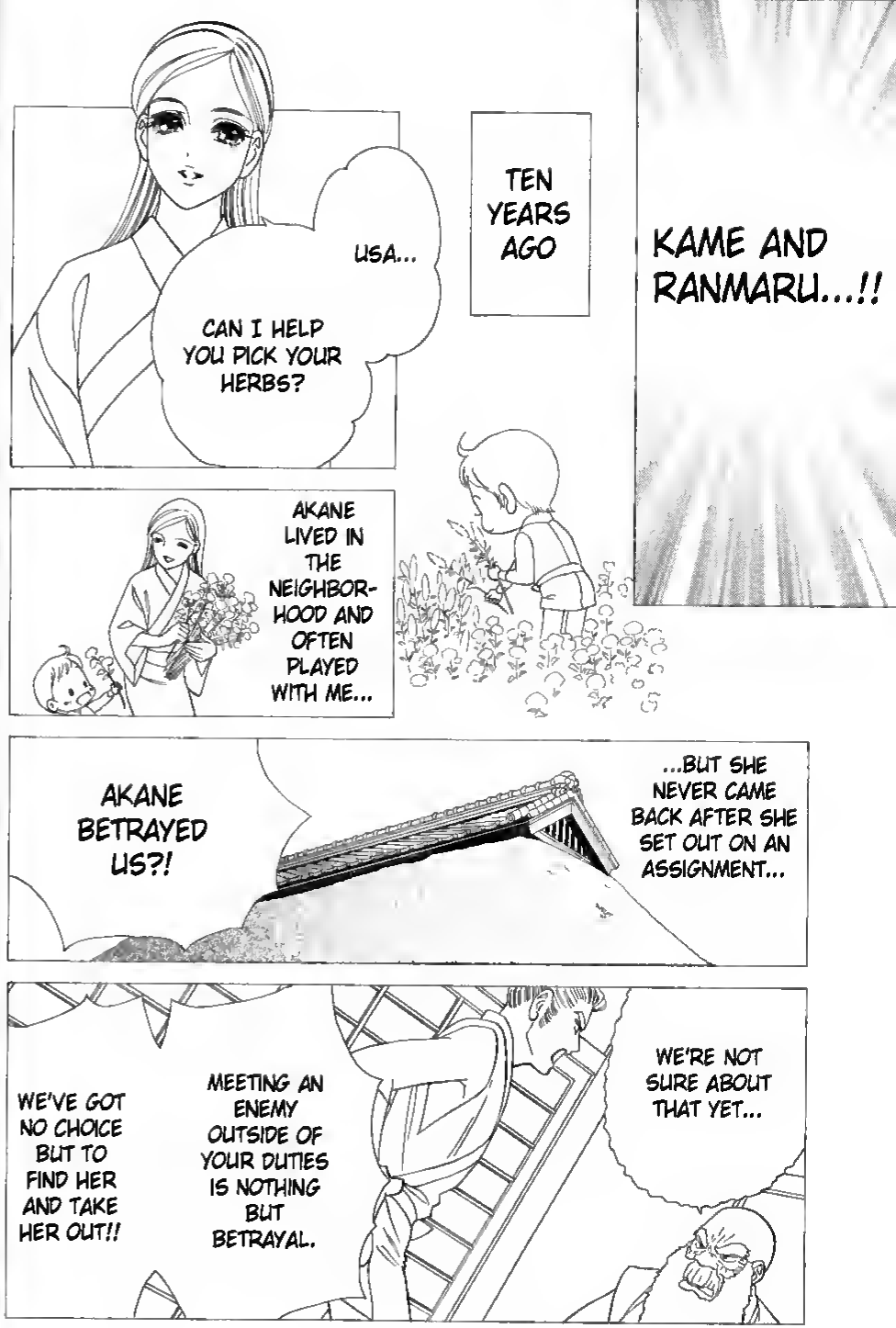
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT MY SCHEDULE.
WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO SEE YOU AGAIN?
RAN-MARU...
...TO THE NEXT TIME WE MEET...
I'LL BE LOOKING FORWARD...

SNIFF...
SHHK

KAME...
SNIFF...
SNIFF...

LOOK AT ME.
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
I'M SORRY, SAKURA...
SAKURA ?!
...NEW NAME?!
IS THAT KAME'S ...

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT BACK THEN.
WE'RE NOT FIGHTING.
GREAT-GRANDPA, DADDY...STOP FIGHTING...!!
WAAAARGH
USAGI...
WHEN YOU BECOME A KUNOICHI...
...YOU CAN SELL YOUR SKILLS, BUT DON'T SELL YOUR SOUL.
AKANE NEVER CAME BACK TO IGA AFTER THAT...


KAME AND RANMARU...!!
TEN YEARS AGO
USA...
CAN I HELP YOU PICK YOUR HERBS?
AKANE LIVED IN THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD AND OFTEN PLAYED WITH ME...
AKANE BETRAYED US?!
...BUT SHE NEVER CAME BACK AFTER SHE SET OUT ON AN ASSIGNMENT...
WE'RE NOT SURE ABOUT THAT YET...
MEETING AN ENEMY OUTSIDE OF YOUR DUTIES IS NOTHING BUT BETRAYAL.
WE'VE GOT NO CHOICE BUT TO FIND HER AND TAKE HER OUT!!

IF GREAT-GRANDPA AND THE OTHERS FIND OUT ABOUT KAME, THEY'RE GOING TO KILL HER!!
SSSHK
WHAT TOOK YOU LONG?
I'M HOME...
...
HA... HANZO...
OH, USAGI.
MITSUHIDE TOLD ME TO THANK YOU. HIS EYES HAVE GOTTEN BETTER.
R... REALLY?
WELL, I'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT...
WHAT?
HM
AH!

SHE BETRAYED US FOR RANMARU?!
HANZO'S A MILLION TIMES MORE SERIOUS THAN GREAT-GRANDPA OR DAD, SO IF I TOLD HIM ABOUT KAME...
NOOOO...
SHE MAY BE YOUR FRIEND, BUT I'LL KILL HER IN AN INSTANT!!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
I...I CAN'T TELL HIM!!
DING
TH-THUMP
OH, USAGI...

UE-RIN'S WAY OF THE MANGA (21)

So in the end, the original manga for my debut became history, and the one-shot I had to redraw from scratch was introduced to the world as my debut piece. It wasn't until a few years later that I realized that making my debut wasn't "the end goal of the way of the manga," but "the beginning of the true way of the manga."

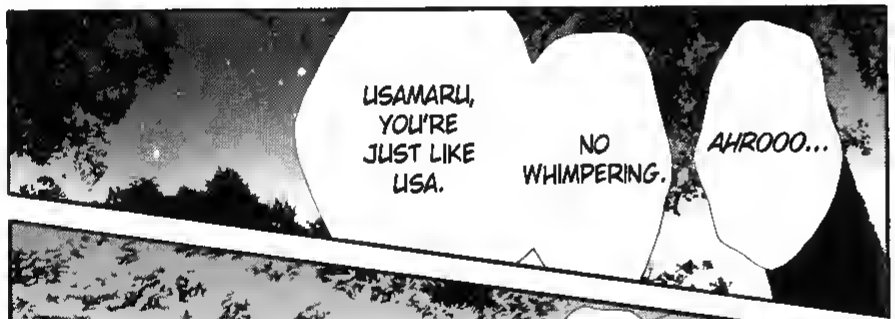
To be continued

Send your messages and letters to the following address. We're looking forward to your requests for the Extra Missions as well!

Rinko Ueda
C/O Shojo Beat
Viz Media
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA
94107

Rinko Ueda

NO!
YOU'RE HAD THREE SESAME DUMPLINGS ALREADY, REMEMBER?!
PANT PANT
THAT TASTED SO GOOD...
WOW...
SNIF SNIF


USAMARU, YOU'RE JUST LIKE USA.
NO WHIMPERING.
AHROOO...

YOU'RE GOING TO GET FAT IF YOU EAT SO MUCH...
FWISH

THE BEST THING FOR YOU RIGHT NOW IS TO JUST LAY LOW.
O... OKAY.
I'M SORRY...
UH... UH-HUH... THAT'S RIGHT...
I THOUGHT SO.
I BET YOU COULDN'T FIND THE FIVE-COLORED RICE, RIGHT?
UM...

GULP
GULP
MAMEZO WILL TAKE CARE OF THE OUTSIDE JOBS FOR A WHILE.

WELL THEN...
I'LL START WITH YOU!!
SHA
AAAAGH
DMP
DMP DMP DMP
DMP

AGH!
FWISH
TUP
ROLL
ROLL
NOT BAD FOR A KID.
OWWW
WHA...
...WHAT?
WHAT WAS THAT ...?!

HUFF
HUFF
A BOAR ?!
CLOMP
CLOMP
I'M GOING TO MAKE HOT POT OUT OF YOU...
!!

URGH
WHAM

SHFF
A...?!

...PIG-LET?
IS THAT YOU...?
SQUEE...
OINK
OINK
OINK
WOOF WOOF
PIGLEEEET...!!

TCH
SHA
SNORT
SNORT
BUG
OOO
RGH
OINK OINK
OWW.
SNIFF...

OINK
UNGH...

IT'S NOT FAIR!!
COULD IT BE BECAUSE I'VE BEEN SO MEAN TO HER...
...THAT SHE DECIDED TO TAKE SIDES WITH RANMARU?!

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
RANMARU IS A HORRIBLE PERSON WHO'S TRYING TO HUNT THE IGA NINJA DOWN...
SO WHY IS KAME IN LOVE WITH A PERSON LIKE THAT?
UN-LESS...

I HAVE TO TALK TO HER!!
I HAVE TO SEE KAME...
I'VE STILL GOT A CHANCE TO GET THROUGH TO HER.
...OF HELPING HER!!
I'VE STILL GOT A CHANCE...
WHERE ARE YOU?
KAME...

HURRY AND WAKE UP!
ZWAK
USAGI... BREAKFAST IS READY.
HUH.
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
USAGI ?!

I KNEW YOU'D BE BACK AGAIN.
!
EE...
...EEYAH!

IF I WAIT HERE...
...MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE KAME AGAIN...

RANMARU?!
TO BE CONTINUED...

GRAB
WHO ARE YOU?!
THAT VOICE...
OWWW!

Page 82: Rakugo
Rakugo is a type of traditional Japanese comedy where a storyteller sits on a large pillow called *zabuton*, uses a paper fan as a prop, and proceeds to tell a long and complicated comical story

Page 134: Usagi
Usagi means "rabbit" in Japanese. In this case, Usagi is referring to herself and Hanzo in the rabbit costume as the pair

Page 149, panel 1: Kame
Kame means "turtle" in Japanese

Page 162: Shinsengumi
The Shinsengumi were a group of masterless samurai created as a special police force in the Kyoto area during the Tokugawa shogunate period. Their flag is famous for having the single kanji for "sincerity" on it.

The ways of the ninja are mysterious indeed, so here is a glossary of terms to help you navigate the intricacies of their world.

Page 2: Azuchi
Azuchi is on Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture, where Oda Nobunaga built his castle and the town that were the center of his operations

Page 2: Honnoji
Honnoji is a temple in Kyoto. Oda Nobunaga often stayed here when he traveled to the capital.

Page 10, panel 3: Sakai
Sakai is a city in Osaka prefecture that is one of the largest and most important seaports in Japan. Once known for samurai swords, Sakai is now famous for quality kitchen knives and other cutlery

Page 21, panel 4: Kunoichi
A term often used for female ninja. The word is spelled くノ一, and when combined, the letters form the kanji for woman, 女。

Page 35, panel 2: Mitsuhide Akechi
Mitsuhide Akechi became one of Oda Nobunaga's retainers after Nobunaga's conquest of Mino province (now Gifu prefecture) in 1566. Akechi is known to have been more of an intellectual and a pacifier than a warrior.

Page 56: Yatagarasu
The Yatagarasu is a three-legged raven that appears in Japanese mythology. It is the bird of the sun goddess Amaterasu.

Page 2: Shimo no Hanzo
Shimo no means "the Lower," and in this case refers to Hanzo's geographic location rather than social status.

Page 2: Iga
Iga is a region on the island of Honshu and also the name of the famous ninja clan that originated there. Another area famous for its ninja is Kouga, in the Shiga prefecture on Honshu. Many books claim that these two ninja clans were mortal enemies, but in reality inter-ninja relations were not as bad as stories might suggest.

Page 2: Ranmaru Mori
Ranmaru Mori is one of Nobunaga's most famous vassals. He became Oda Nobunaga's attendant at a young age and was recognized for his talent and loyalty.

Page 2: Okazaki
Okazaki is in Aichi Prefecture on the main island of Honshu, about 22 miles from Nagoya.

Page 2: Oda Nobunaga
Nobunaga lived from 1534 to 1582, and came close to unifying Japan. He is probably one of the most famous Japanese warlords. He was the first warlord to successfully incorporate the gun in battle, and was notorious for his ruthlessness.

Many types of animals appear in this manga. I had a puppy and a pet bird when I was young, but aside from that, I haven't had much to do with animals. Whenever an animal appears in the story, I need to flip through books and photos in order to draw them. Just when I finally get the hang of drawing animals, however, they tend to cease appearing in the manga. *Wry smile* Out of all the animals, I have the greatest difficulty drawing cats.

–Rinko Ueda